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United States Foreign Policy and the 9/11 Crisis

Leo J. Mahoney

Lots of things have happened since the fateful American morning of September 11, 2001. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to notice the differences; though that's hardly a dead-end career option these days. Just pick up almost any newspaper and read about the after-effects of 9/11.

The Patriot Act of 2002, for instance, has elicited winces and gnarls (and lawsuits) from the wary civil libertarians of the ACLU ("A Question of Freedom" 47-49). Another post-9/11 policy priority of the George W. Bush administration – one that apparently was leaked to the press - is an allegedly secret presidential order directing military officials to develop guidelines for deciding when to "cyberattack" an enemy's computer networks. Hacker Bush? (Graham A6; Schiesel E1, E5; Mitchell 3). In a clearly less secretive way, airport travel regulations have become a boon to manufacturers of quality sandals and socks since shoe security has become a – well – fetish of the new Transportation Security Administration (Stellin 7; Turner B17; Sharkey 9).

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has begun talking to itself seriously about resuming tests of America's formidable nuclear arsenal for the first time since 1992 (Tetreault 3B; Pincus A9; Fleck A5; Ramberg 6). What's the point this time?

> The Bush administration has given STRATCOM [the brand-new United States Strategic Command, which replaces the old Strategic Air Command and the more recent Space Command] dramatically expanded responsibilities for developing strategies and weapons systems to combat rogue states, terrorist organizations and other potential adversaries – including the possible use of nuclear weapons (Cooper A18).

Furthermore, long-standing cordiality and even politeness in Franco-American and German-American relations seem to be history now, as western Europeans generally question, criticize and disapprove the post-9/11 policies and perspectives of the North American "hyperpower" ("EU Ponders Handling US Hyperpower" 1, 14; "France Praises Turkey's New Iraq Policy" 1, 14). Then, too, on the other side of the Atlantic pond, highly-placed Americans have been questioning the value of NATO to long-term United States policy interests (Pfaff: June 26, 2003 8; Pfaff:July 21, 2003 6; "Is Poland America's Donkey or Could It Become NATO's Horse?" 25-26; "US More Forgiving of Some War Critics Than Others" 1, 14). These transatlantic fissures have had as much to do with post-Cold War manifestations of diverging interests between France and Germany and the United States as with post-9/11

American so-called unilateralism; but the latter has certainly brought the issues forcefully into the public arena on both sides of the ocean.

Ruffled European-American relations are also owing to what one close observer has described as a transformation in the American way of war since September 11, 2001. "Pre-emption, precision 'stand-off' weapons, the use of special forces as global SWAT teams – these are the new mode of the American *über* power," says Michael Hirsh, author of *At War With Ourselves* (2003). According to Evan Thomas and Martha Brant, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was at first stymied when he tried to push the armed forces to develop "faster, leaner, more flexible" tactics. The events of 9/11 changed the situation quickly. They handed the Pentagon (so far) a pair of research and development laboratories called Afghanistan and Iraq. George W. Bush decided to use them as test cases to assert American power in Central Asia and the Middle East, and to make sure anti-American regimes get a clear message about the technological supremacy, and the determination to use it, of the United States (Thomas and Brant 17-18). In contrast, Hirsh argues from a more irenic standpoint that Iraq and Afghanistan are, instead, test cases of the effectiveness of American power "to fundamentally transform societies that have turned into harbors for terrorists or weapons of mass destruction" (Hirsh 38).

Not surprisingly, another worldwide debate has been going on lately among foreign policy/international relations/cultural studies/history buffs (Niall Ferguson and Max Boot vs.*The Economist* and almost everyone else, for instance) over allegations of the existence, the essence and the presumable uses of an ostensible American empire. "This is what Europe must do to resist American might," *The Guardian's* Simon Tisdall declaims (May 8, 2003 12). Brian Murphy, in *The Turkish Daily News'* second anniversary of 9/11/01 issue, peremptorily asks, "A new world war?" and answers softly "Some say it's already here" (Sept. 11, 2003 7).

Macgregor Knox, an American professor of international history at the LSE, insists that "America is fighting a global civil war," an idea that loosely aligns him with Professor Samuel Huntington's widely touted clash of civilizations thesis of 1993. Knox warns ominously – and insightfully – that "Those who find militant Islam terrifying have clearly never seen a militant democracy" (Apr. 15, 2003 15). Professor Knox is no doubt on to something ominous, which is exactly what the aftermath of September 11, 2001, is all about.

It is useful to recall – as many people in Washington, DC, and few in Paris, do – that the post-Ground Zero era has some unpleasantly significant antecedents. Professor Charles Hill of Yale and Baylor universities, a career American diplomat, has reminded attentive persons that the suicidal airliner attacks in America on September 11, 2001, were not the first depredations perpetrated by terrorists against Americans in recent times (Hill in Talbott and Chanda 81-86). In fact, terrorist assaults on Americans date at least as far back as the murders of United States ambassadors in Sudan (1973) and Lebanon (1976).

Professor Hill's inventory also includes the hostage-takings at the American embassy in Tehran in 1979, an event that tends to obscure the memory of the murder of the American ambassador in Kabul, and the torching of the American embassy in Islamabad, in the same year. There is much more. Another spike in terrorism occurred in 1983, the year which saw

the hijacking of TWA 843 to Beirut, the murder of Leon Klinghoffer aboard the *Achille Lauro*, the murders of 46 people at the American embassy in Beirut, and the deaths of 231 American marines in their barracks at the Beirut airport. Two years later, Americans also died in the bombing of a Berlin night club in an unprovoked experiment in terrorism carried out by Muammar Gadaffy's thugs. American retaliation came with the swift bombardment of Gaddafy's desert compound in 1985, but Libyan agents counterattacked viciously against Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1989.

A fresh wave of terrorist activity began with the deaths of 19 American soldiers in a bomb attack on Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, the same year that Osama bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan. He soon issued a *fatwa* urging Muslims to kill Americans everywhere; though exactly how his edict is supposed to apply to American Muslims remains unclear. His*fatwa* was followed by devastating explosions at American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, in August, 1998, and another lethal blast aboard the *USS Cole* in Yemen in October, 2000. It is likely that Osama bin Laden's murderous minions were responsible for these attacks.

So far, the estimate among western Arab affairs watchers is that bin Laden's profound antipathy towards the United States is (was?) motivated by the Americans' postwar abandonment of the CIA-backed *mujahideen* in Afghanistan after Soviet withdrawal from that country, compounded by later CIA efforts to cover up their early support of bin Laden through diplomatic pressures on Khartoum to expel him in 1996 (Abbas Amanat in Talbott and Chanda 38-44). This was a typically stupid bureaucratic chicanery on the part of the CIA, which is nevertheless explicable as an effort to quietly head off probable future embarrassment during a time of political irresolution in Washington. In any case, it didn't work.

The dangerous covert harassment of Osama bin Laden, combined with the Saudi regime's mindless policy of financing widespread education networks of anti-western religious fanatics, and the Americans' reputation in the Middle East for one-sided support of Israel's Palestinian policies, led directly to the plots to carry out the murders in New York City and Washington, DC, on September 11, 2001. If we recall Professor Charles Hill's impressive chronology of latter-day anti-American terrorism, the event should not have been a surprise – least of all to America's outrageously expensive and often bumbling intelligence agencies (Johnston: July 24, 2003 1, 4; "CIA, FBI, NSA All Faulted in Failures That Preceded Sept. 11 Terrorist Attacks" 9; Lumpkin: June 7, 2003).

This is not to argue that the United States was responsible for the deaths of some 3,000 persons on September 11, 2001. It is clear that these horrific murders were committed at the behest of bin Laden and his Al Qaeda cohort, whose slapdash ideological buncombe is barely credible even if it's traveling band of videotape artists agree to subject themselves to the same suicidal fate they reserve for their disciples. It is also clearly the case, in Indonesia at least, as a repentant terrorist has told a trial court there, that Al Qaeda's ideology is not representative of the Muslim community's beliefs ("Remorseful Bali Bomb Suspect Says He Only Followed Orders" 8).

From a strictly political point of view, Al Qaeda's attacks on September 11, 2001, intended to send a strong message of antipathy to and contempt for the United States and, in fact, for every citizen of the secular West. In this aim, they mostly succeeded. On the other hand, if Al Qaeda's ultimate aim is to drive American power from the Muslim world, their record is, so far, unimpressive. Indeed, their acts have prompted development of exactly the opposite condition in both the Middle East and Central Asia. The defect of Al Qaeda's policy may have been due to a misreading of American national character, as well as an apparently total ignorance of the contemporary intellectual and technological prowess of America's foreign policy elite.

It may be notable for several reasons that the CIA's director, George J. Tenet, traipsed to Sun Valley, Idaho, in July, 2003, to tell a group of presumably physically secure and comfortably well-heeled investment bankers that Al Qaeda's leadership were surprised in October, 2001, when American military forces actually struck back at them in Afghanistan after the attacks in Washington, DC, and New York City (Gertz and Scarborough A5). If Tenet's report is true, the news could mean that Al Qaeda's picture of the quality and energy of the mind and muscle of the United States was dangerously out of focus. Its vision may still be pretty foggy, and there is lots of evidence from Morocco to Indonesia that this myopia carries with it significant risks.

For example, in August, 2003, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia chose to use words reminiscent of George W. Bush's similar remarks when he stated, "There is no room for neutrality or hesitancy. . . .He who protects or sympathizes with a terrorist is himself a terrorist, and will receive his just punishment" (Bradley A13). Apparently, the prince decided that running gun battles in the streets of his capital, between the royal police and Islamist fanatics, is too close to Hollywood's violent secularist scenarios for serene comfort. Perhaps the prince's belated public conversion to the Bush administration's line on terrorism has come too late to save the pre-9/11 cozy Saudi-American diplomatic and financial relationships, which have suffered since that day from revelations of the kingdom's ties to anti-American terrorists (Robinson 20; Johnston: August 6, 2003 4). Perhaps not. It is certain, though, that terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia increase the likelihood of governmental cooperation with the United States elsewhere. So far, not only has no government anywhere fallen as a result of terrorist acts, but their surviving perpetrators are actually being legally prosecuted throughout the Muslim world. This may be a more significant fact than the rise of Al Qaeda.

One of the definitive consequences of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, is the American war in Iraq. It is a direct outcome of the rise to power of a clique of so-called neoconservatives, who came to office and influence when George W. Bush occupied the White House in January, 2001 (Fitzgerald 4; Dobra-Manco 7; "Rumsfeld's Pentagon Gains Clout in US Gov't" 14). Certainly, it was deeply frustrating for these foreign policy architects and theorists, who believe in the accuracy and efficacy and urgency of their post-Cold War vision, to hang fire for the eight long years – "years of cozy illusions and stupid pretensions" (Krauthammer V5) – of the Bill Clinton presidency. This hiatus may have been especially hard on the aging but vigorous Donald Rumsfeld, appointed secretary of defense by George W. Bush in 2001.

Given the political and psychological pressures of the crisis following the 9/11 attacks, and the pent-up energies of the team that faced them, no one should be surprised that the

American responses have been scary at times (Zakaria 15-30; Reeves A14). Nor should anyone be surprised if a deliberate policy of spreading anxiety, adopted by the American neoconservatives, has turned out to have quite rational uses. As the eminently rational (and usually diplomatic) *New York Times* columnist, Thomas L. Friedman, wrote in August, 2003, "removing Saddam and building a more decent Iraq would … send a message to all the neighboring regimes that Western governments were not going to just sit back and let them incubate suicide bombers and religious totalitarians, whose fanaticism threatened all open societies" (Friedman 6). Friedman is right about "removing Saddam," but he's very likely over-optimistic about "building a more decent Iraq". It's possible to do the former and not the latter, since the effect on thoughtful potential adversaries will be the same.

By the time the neoconservatives got the chance to try out their foreign policy theses, the United States itself was under terrorist attack. They were able to strike back quickly and effectively in Afghanistan, driving the Taliban out of power and chasing Al Qaeda's chieftains into the remote mountains near, and secret hideouts in, Pakistan's frontier cities. Osama bin Laden's credit card carrying *kamikazes* had surprised an American policymaking elite who were intellectually and technologically ready to strike back almost immediately (Kettle 11; Greenway 8). Perhaps the Turkish public figure who best understands the major theses and doctrines of the American neoconservative elite is General Yaşar Büyükanıt. His remarks, published in *The Turkish Daily News* late in May, 2003, are well worth contemplating (Büyükanıt 7). In fact, despite the Pentagon's new-found zeal for testing custom-made nuclear bombs, it is probably not necessary for the United States to rattle its atomic sabers with the aim of scaring potential enemies into cooperation with its anti-terrorist policy. The object-lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq – civil discord, political fragmentation, and ethnic and tribal strife – amount to daily reminders to governments like Syria's, Libya's and Iran's that similar fates could befall them. Chaos, like anxiety, though painful, has rational uses.

The rise of the neoconservatives should have surprised nobody except Al Qaeda and the Taliban who, along with such allies as they can still cajole, are faced by an American administration determined to destroy them even at the cost of war, occupation of significant Middle Eastern and Central Asian territory, and alienation of some long-standing alliances. In the midst of the Bush administration's crisis of September, 2001 – the last administration to evacuate Washington, DC, was James Madison's – the neoconservatives kept their heads (Donald Rumsfeld left his office and walked out to help rescue victims at the Pentagon, but he certainly didn't stop thinking about what to do later that day). They had already prepared the ground intellectually, during the 1990s, for a major American policy reorientation. Perhaps most importantly, a so-called defense planning guidance paper of March, 1992, prepared by two of Rumsfeld's *protegés* – Paul Wolfowitz and Zalmay Khalilzad – set forth a stunning thesis of a new world order based on a specifically American version of hegemony that rivals the clarity and perspicacity of George F. Kennan's famous Long Telegram from Moscow in 1946. The Wolfowitz/Khalilzad paper persuasively argued that, in the aftermath of the fragmentation of the Soviet empire, the only country in a solid position to maintain peace, order and prosperity amid the likely discords of the post-Cold War era is the United States. In pursuing such a role, the United States might hold sway to keep the peace, in a unipolar

world, if it could (1) convince rivals like Russia, China and the European Union that it would support their legitimate interests, if necessary, with force, and (2) maintain "the mechanisms for deterring political competitors from even aspiring to a larger global or regional role" – that is, maintain military, technological and economic hegemony (Fitzgerald 4).

Far from a depiction of journalists' favored colorful image of an American frontier sheriff with six-shooters drawn, the Wolfowitz/Khalilzad prospectus requires an almost superhuman sobriety and seriousness of purpose, as well as a consistent vision of great power mutuality of interest, on the part of designers of American statecraft. This is no simple-minded Yankee-imperialist prescription. Professor Paul Kennedy of Yale University has put the issue's complexity succinctly, as follows:

> . . . it will not be possible for the United States to pursue a Grand Strategy designed only to prevail in an age of terror. Rather, it will have to do that in conjunction with the maintenance of many of its traditional political and military goals, and in pursuit of objectives that have not disappeared simply because bin Laden arrived on our television screens. America may then need a hybrid strategy, a two-level policy which is a strategist's nightmare because of the fear of crossed purposes and conflicting missions. And the U. S. government may be compelled repeatedly to change horses in mid-stream – to confront a terrorist threat on a Monday and a traditional type of threat in the Taiwan Straits on a Friday, or both together – which will make demands on our strategic judgement that would strain even Bismarck's genius (Kennedy in Talbott and Chanda 61).

As a first step in the elaboration of the neoconservative policy vision, the Wolfowitz/Khalilzad paper of 1992 pointed to a need to curtail the contemporary proliferation of weapons of mass destruction with or without United Nations approval and/or coalitions of allies to help. This is the crucial point in the American construct that both Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein seem to have overlooked. It is also being ignored by some commentators on the obviously sloppy aftermaths of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Still, if we raise our sights above the (not necessarily worrisome) temporary strife of those two countries, we may glimpse the continuity of American policies towards a probably nuclear North Korea and a potentially nuclear Iran. It may help if General Büyükanıt's thoughtful, and diplomatic, remarks on the post-Twin Towers American strategic concept are considered here, first:

> Any negative approach or obstacle, which prevents the developed countries from maintaining and augmenting the level of prosperity they have achieved, is viewed as a threat. In other words, nations harmonizing their national interests with the global interests will be able to live in peace. Otherwise, they will continue to experience the security concern (Büyükanıt 7).

The currently celebrated Professor Niall Ferguson (*Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World*, 2003) seems to overstate General Büyükanıt's assessment when he says that the people "now in charge of the [American] defense department have grabbed September 11 as a chance to push through an imperial agenda," though the "e-word" is seldom employed in public. Professor Ferguson's formulation of the issue may be closer to the truth of events when he adds that "the United States is an empire . . . in denial, and U. S. denial of this poses a real danger to the world" (Gibbons). This idea brings us much closer to the problems of

American postwar policies in Afghanistan and Iraq than a mere assertion of the existence of an American empire. For the (attitudinal) denial of empire arises from the traditional reluctance of the American people to undertake the burdens of empire as such. A rose by any name still has thorns.

It may be argued that recent American efforts to bring about international coalitions through NATO, the United Nations and established nuclear powers to deal with Iraq, Iran and North Korea signal a conscious backing away from the ambitions, temptations and troubles of a genuine, even if unacknowledged, imperial policy ("A Change of Heart" 43-44). "America has changed since September 11," says *The Economist*. "The new mood allows for more nationalism, more assertiveness, less patience with allies, a greater readiness to go it alone. But there is no appetite to spend a lifetime in a sweaty country in the service of a noble cause." ("Manifest Destiny Warmed Up?" 21). That is very likely the feeling of most Americans. Yet, these lately irenic American policy maneuvers might also be thought of as efforts of the committed neoconservatives to bolster their strategy as elaborated in President George W. Bush's speech at West Point in June, 2002, and systematized in "The National Security Strategy of the United States" white paper of September, 2002 (Dobra-Manco 7). The national security strategy paper expresses the American desire to act multilaterally and pacifically wherever possible, but also promises that the United States "will not hesitate to act alone . . . against emerging threats before they are formed" – a clear reference to the prospects of nuclear proliferation in Iraq, Iran and North Korea ("The New National Security Strategy of the United States" 7). Emphasizing the same point, Bush said in his West Point address of June 2, 2002, "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long" (Engel 10; Burkemann and Paton 9). Although much has been made lately out of Bush's nod towards a policy of pre-emption, the fact is that his neoconservative posture is a reaction to the obvious condition that the spread of offensive nuclear and missile technologies has begun to rob the defense of the luxury of sedate and reposeful deliberations. A similar situation, involving only a few nuclear states at the time, brought about the Soviet-American policy of *détente* in the 1970s. The issue these days is rather more complex. At bottom, it's a matter of trust among culturally and psychologically variegated political elites, some of whose acts and outlooks are demonstrably anti-western.

Having stated the basic fact of cultural and psychological divergence, we can perceive the current crises in relations between the United States and both North Korea and Iran from the point of view of America's post-9/11 policy constraints. It is arguable that the Bush administration (and its British partners) tried out diplomacy as a means to unseat Saddam Hussein for some months before striking Baghdad on March 20, 2003. Certainly, there were Anglo-American proposals that Saddam should step down from power and leave Iraq, and American demands that Iraqis surrender to Hans Blix's United Nations weapons inspectors all pertinent records, equipment and experimental prototypes related to its weapons programs. At the time of this writing (September, 2003), American demands for a verifiable end to nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development in North Korea, and American support for International Atomic Energy Agency demands that Iran turn over all information related to its nuclear programs and forswear militarizing them, seem to repeat the American diplomatic posture in the months before the war with Iraq. Clearly, the United States has no intention of

permitting the Iranians and the North Koreans to possess and develop weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them to North America and its allies in the Middle East and East Asia (Sanger:Apr. 18, 2003 1,4; "Fissionable" 26). American attitudes towards North Korean and Iranian leaderships are obviously permeated with distrust. Frankly, it is difficult to see how the verbal confrontations between Washington and Tehran and Pyongyang can end in peaceful resolutions of the issues.

At the risk of repeating the fact, it might be useful to ask again why the Americans so adamantly oppose the spread of nuclear weapons. There are several reasons. Some are quite obvious. Here is a simple one chosen because it may not be obvious:

A nuclear attack might begin with the explosion of a massive bomb at high altitude, above the heartland of America's Midwest, which could blast out an EMP [electromagnetic pulse] that would knock out telephones, radios, computers, car ignitions, perhaps even trigger surges in the control systems of nuclear power plants that could lead to shutdowns – or even meltdowns – of the nuclear reactors. One such bomb detonated [in space, above the United States] might so incapitate the United States that there would be no need for further attack; the nation would be crippled already (Bova 118-119).

Such a hazardous technological contingency goes some distance towards explaining why "The National Security Strategy of the United States" says that "... the president has no intention of allowing any foreign power to catch up with the huge technological lead the United States has opened since the fall of the Soviet Union more than a decade ago" ("The New National Security Strategy of the United States" 7). Similar dangers also explain the eight billion dollars allotted in 2003 for research and development of an American anti-ballistic missile defense program (Mahoney 13). They also explain why writers like Margaret Atwood have become millionaires, and why most literature professors have not ("New Fiction: Biting at the Future" 76). As Atwood describes her method, she simply compiles boxes of newspaper clippings to provoke her imagination (Pepper 60).

In the face of American pressures, the North Koreans seem to have three options. First, they can do nothing. From time to time, they appear to prefer this approach to the problem (Lumpkin: Sept. 11, 2003). Second, they can attack the United States or its allies, Japan and South Korea, a suicidal act which would surely result in the destruction of North Korea. Thirdly, they can play for time in the hope that what they think of as their nuclear deterrent will become operational soon and permit them to bargain for favorable terms (diplomatic recognition, material assistance, a non-aggression pact) from the United States.

Probably, Pyongyang is dithering and blustering its way towards its third option, but there are serious obstacles along this road. Obviously, the first impediment is the stated determination of the United States to maintain its freedom of action in world policy. This American resolve strongly suggests a pre-emptive strike, as the North Koreans themselves seem to think (Jae-Suk Yoo 8; "North Korea Hardens Stance on Nukes" 9; "Rumsfeld Places Bombers On Alert" A9; "US Repositioning Bombers Near N. Korea" 9; Lumpkin: Sept. 11, 2003). At this point, nobody in Washington is saying where such a strike would be made (Pollack B11). Yongbyon, site of North Korea's main nuclear program is a logical target ("Seoul Says N. Korea Reprocessed Nuclear Rods" 1, 14). At least one other possible nuclear

installation seems certain to exist in North Korea, possibly an underground facility (Kristof 4; Wehrfritz and Wolffe 35; Watts and Borger 2; Sanger and Shanker 1, 4). As for Pyongyang's recent claims to possess nuclear weapons, Washington's ostentatious naval posturings and its constraints on North Korea's illicit trading in drugs and weapons and fake currency have given the North Koreans a chance to stage a demonstration of the fact (Weisman 1A, 10A). Maybe they will decide to put on such a show of their nuclear prowess, and that propaganda would stand in marked contrast to the American decision of August, 1945, to actually employ nuclear weapons in battle.

In August, 2003, the president of Japan's National Defense Academy publicly posed several objections to a North Korean-American non-aggression treaty, as follows: (1) the difficulty of verifying that Pyongyang actually has given up its nuclear weapons programs, (2) the likelihood that North Korea would demand removal of American forces from South Korea as an earnest of good will, (3) a possible demand from Okinawans that American leave their base there, too, and (4) the resulting inability of the United States to defend Japan in event of a North Korean attack with biological and chemical weapons, prompting Tokyo towards constructing a nuclear deterrent as a defensive measure (Nishihara A19; Brooke 1, 4; Kageyama A15).

Official Chinese interest in a denuclearized North Korea is also paramount because a nuclear Pyongyang will likely tempt Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei to arm themselves with nuclear weapons, too. This development would also probably mean permanent American military and naval forces and maneuvers in South Korea, Japan, the Philippines and Taiwan. To put it mildly, China may find its front yard rather more crowded with bristling nuclear powers than it would wish. Beijing is therefore not amused by its North Korean ally's recent tuggings on Superman's cape. Were such a multifaceted atomic architecture to arise in East Asia, the main winner from a Chinese point of view would be Russia. Nor are the Chinese especially happy with the North Korean refugee situation on their Yalu River doorstep ("PLA to Guard Border with North Korea" 9).

Though for quite different reasons, it is apparent that China and the United States share a common interest in either a reform or an overthrow of the current government of North Korea. Washington and Beijing may find it both expedient and useful to bring about either changes in the regime, or a regime change, in Pyongyang, and sooner rather than later. An immediate relaxation of tensions throughout northeast Asia would result from a Sino-American cooperative effort to oust Kim Jong-il's incompetent and irascible government. The two capitals might then arrange a mutually satisfactory reunification of a non-nuclear Korean nation, ending once and for all the unnatural and dangerous condition of tensions and hostilities in that quarter of Asia. Both the Yalta Conference of January-February, 1945, and the Soviet-American deals over removal of missiles from Cuba in 1962-63, offer solid precedents for a great power accord made over the heads of the peoples locally concerned in order to avert devastating consequences (Lukacs; White). The resulting Sino-American accord might even lead to gradual withdrawal of American forces from South Korea (Will B11). At that point, a Sino-Japanese non-aggression pact would not be a far-fetched prospect.

The issue of America's post-9/11 policy toward the Iranian nuclear program is complex, involving exports of Russian atomic and missile technologies, European Union-Iranian trade talks, Tehran's apparent influence among certain factions in postwar Iraq, its probable technological exchanges with North Korea, and the Iranian government's attitude towards the Nuclear Nonproliferation Pact of which it is a signatory. In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, Iran provided useful military intelligence during the American war against the Taliban, and proved to be no friend of Saddam Hussein in the American war in

Iraq (“Next on the List?” 25). Nevertheless, the Bush administration recognized that Tehran’s ayatollahs had their own reasons for opposing Al Qaeda and Saddam (Wolffe and Dehghanpisheh 23).

From Washington’s coign of vantage, the keys to policy towards Iran are the worrisome direction of its nuclear programs and its support of terrorists in Palestine. It is often urged that America opposes Iranian possession of nuclear-tipped missiles because they could strike Israel (“Iran Completes Tests of Missile That Can Hit Israel” 1, 14). It may be time to notice that missiles from Iran that can hit Israel can also strike Jordan, Turkey and other allies of the United States in the Middle East and Central Asia. In fact, it appears that American intelligence about Iranian nuclear programs is far superior to its insight into North Korea’s. This is a point worth remembering when pondering Washington’s moves regarding Tehran (Matthews 24).

It might seem churlish to suggest it, but the fact is that the United States has not been fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and spending billions of dollars to promote favorable governmental anti-terrorism policies from Morocco to Mongolia, only to stand by idly and watch its effort and achievement put in jeopardy by a clique of Iranian divines who seem to want to add nuclear rockets to their psychical armory. Given the post-9/11 ascendancy of the neoconservatives, it’s probably a safe bet that the Bush administration is going to try to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons with which to arm its ballistic missiles, if that is still possible (“US Gathers 20 Allies to Force Iran Nuclear Deadline” 9; Banerjee and Jehl 3; DeLuce 4; Dickey and Bahari 23). Tehran has vowed to negotiate its adherence to a protocol to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty which could give the United Nations’ atomic energy agency unfettered access to all of Iran’s nuclear programs (“Tehran Pledges Commitment to Nuclear Pact” 9). If the Iranians are bluffing, equally safe bets might be war, or the nuclearization of the entire region by means of the further extension of the American nuclear umbrella until such time as the United States develops workable systems of theater anti-missile defense with which to protect its own and its allies’ vital interests in the area. The effects of this novel atomic architecture on the already nuclearized perennial Indo-Pakistani ethnic, religious, cultural and territorial rivalries are beyond the scope of this paper.

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