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**The New World Order:  
A Historical Perspective**

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## The New World Order: An Historical Perspective <sup>1</sup>

Paul W. Schroeder

This is not the usual historian's argument for the importance of knowing history in dealing with current international problems. It does not claim that such knowledge can give policymakers the right combination of policies and strategies now, or offer lessons, analogies, and examples from history as guides for policy. Only expert knowledge of current circumstances entitles one to argue for specific policy measures now, or to decide whether something that seemed to work in the past can still work today. Still less does it argue for historical continuity in the midst of change, claiming that the more things change, the more they remain the same. It insists instead that the profound changes transforming the international system especially in recent decades have made most lessons and patterns of the past irrelevant or misleading.

What it does argue is that precisely these changes in international politics have made a long-range historical perspective more vital than ever, not merely for background information on current events, but above all as the framework for a broad understanding of the world order today and therefore for a general conception of what we should, and should not, want, hope, and try to do in that world order. In other words, it concerns not so much what policymakers and practitioners should do in current world politics as how all Americans should think about current world politics. The present debates in the United States over policy toward Russia, Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, and other areas of actual or looming conflict make clear the need for this perspective, for they reflect a pervasive uncertainty and disagreement over the nature and reality of the so-called New World Order (hereinafter, NWO) in which we are supposedly living since the end of the Cold War. The answers to the most basic questions about the NWO--whether there really is one, what it is, and what can be done with it--require a fairly long historical perspective, revealing how the NWO developed and what produced it and comparing it to earlier international orders. To attempt to provide this historical perspective in a short essay means crowding a big, complex picture into a very small frame, omitting and oversimplifying a great deal, and simply asserting many points that ought to be explained and proved. Nonetheless, even a sketchy argument may be useful.

### A. The Current Definition

The phrase "New World Order", like most slogans, is commonly used without definition. The best way to tell what the term signifies to those who use it is to look at the measures carried out or called for in its name since the end of the Cold War, drawing the prevailing concept of the NWO out of them. Most of these measures involve peacemaking in various trouble spots or dangerous areas in the world--more specifically, actions to preserve or restore law and order, deter and/or stop and punish aggression and oppression, separate combatants and induce or compel them to stop fighting, relieve civilian suffering, and promote civil and human rights. There has been relatively little debate, at least in the United States, over whether these kinds of international actions are in theory legitimate and desirable under the NWO; the disagreement, as will be seen, mainly concerns their practical implications and consequences.

Thus a reasonable working definition of the NWO would be an international system in which the United States and like-minded friends and allies act under the aegis of the UN to preserve or establish peace by upholding international law and order against aggressors, lawbreakers and oppressors. Implicit in this definition is the notion that if the NWO is to survive and really work, the international community will in some cases have to proceed beyond persuasion, mediation, and conciliation to deterrence and compellence, the use of force. The NWO was born, according to many, out of a major collective war against Iraq as an aggressor. The actions taken since by the United States and other states in Iraq and Somalia and frequently proposed in regard to Bosnia all involve some use of armed force. Other coercive actions against other supposed aggressors and lawbreakers are often urged in the name of the NWO. The arguments for these measures--their humanitarian purposes, the dangers of neglecting the crises and letting violence, atrocities, and aggression continue unchecked, and the claim that they are called for and approved by the international community, above all the UN--assume the existence of a NWO with these aims, mandates, and requirements.

Few Americans reject the notion of such a NWO on principle or oppose all American participation in international efforts to promote peace and humanitarian causes, though they may

express reservations (e.g., that noble intentions do not guarantee good results, that peacemaking efforts always serve particular interests and are easily abused and exploited for selfish ends, and that America has its own problems to solve before trying to meet those of the whole world). The main disagreement arises over attempts to uphold the NWO by force, compelling aggressors to stop what they are doing and disgorge their gains or forcing states to obey some law or code of international conduct supposedly set by the international community. Often the concerns are practical ones (the operation's sustainability, limits, chances of success, costs, risks, precedents, unintended consequences, etc.) But other challenges go to issues of principle. Who is to decide who is right among the parties in conflict, and by what right or principle? What gives UN resolutions the sanctity and force of law? Why should some resolutions be rigorously enforced and others not, some international crimes punished and others ignored?

Thus where Americans largely agree tacitly on the definition of the NWO as an international system designed to produce general compliance with certain standards of international conduct by various means, including the possible use of force, they sharply disagree over the reality, practicability, and desirability of this NWO in terms of actual outcomes. "Idealists," noting that civil, ethnic, and interstate conflict have expanded in the world following the end of the Cold War, argue that if the rule of law is not upheld now in critical instances like Bosnia or Iraq, this will encourage lawlessness and aggression, undermine the NWO, waste an historic opportunity to promote peace and justice, and promote new violence and conflict throughout the world. Meanwhile "realists", seeing the same problems and trends in the world, stress the difficulties, dangers, and unpredictable and uncontrollable consequences of such measures, the limited resources available to the United States and its allies, their divergences of view on many questions, the limits to American interests in many areas of the world, and the shaky juridical basis and controversial nature of all claims about international law and justice. Some "realists" conclude that the NWO is simply a mirage, that historic patterns of power politics, national conflict, and great-power rivalry still prevail in world politics, so that even for purposes of limiting war and preserving general peace it is better

to reserve the use of American force solely for clearly defined and strictly limited American national interests.

Frequently in cases like this, key assumptions shared by both sides without their being fully aware of it go unarticulated and unchallenged, distorting and stultifying the debate. This essay is an attempt to articulate such a shared assumption. Its central contention is that where the two sides openly disagree about the NWO, i.e., about the likely consequences of acting or failing to act according to its supposed mandates and requirements, they are both right; and where they tacitly agree, in their definition or concept of the NWO, they are both wrong.

#### B. How Both Sides are Right about the NWO

To start with the idealists: they are right to insist that a genuinely new and effective NWO has emerged in the last fifty years, especially the last decade, and further right in believing that this NWO, if not sustained and developed, may break down at great cost and risk to the United States and the whole international community. One need not be an international historian to see that a new era in international relations has emerged since World War Two. In fact, the evidences of it are by now so familiar that we take them for granted and fail to see how startling they are in historical perspective. The signs include: the conversion of Germany and Japan in one generation from militarist, imperialist aggressors to stable, democratic industrial giants ambitious for trade and prosperity rather than military or political power; the economic and political integration and permanent pacification of Western Europe; the dismantling of the great European colonial empires, largely peacefully and voluntarily; the expansion of the UN to world-wide scope, the recognition of official juridical equality among its members, and its growth in reach and effectiveness for practical peacekeeping; the preservation of general peace (i.e., no system-wide wars and no all-out wars between major powers) through four decades of intense ideological and political competition between rival blocs, even while new powers were emerging and dangerous regional conflicts and rivalries constantly flared up; the gradual development of restraints on the arms race and the cooling of ideological rivalry even while this competition went on;<sup>2</sup> the admission of a host of new or transformed states into the world community; and finally, the end of the Cold War and the (till now,

at least) generally peaceful dismantling and transformation of the Soviet empire. The point is not that this has yielded a brave new world free of war and upheaval. No one claims that; few if any think that such a world will ever come about. The point is rather that accomplishments such as this were unheard of and impossible in previous eras of history. When one adds to these developments others perhaps less spectacular or more disputable but nonetheless hopeful and progressive (e.g., democratization in Spain and Portugal, the end of apartheid in South Africa, progress toward Arab-Israeli peace, the astonishing economic and political development of the western Pacific Rim, the decline of dictatorships and rise of democracies in Latin America and elsewhere) the case for the existence of the NWO, i.e., a genuine new order of international politics, becomes overwhelming.

The historian's contribution to understanding this remarkable change is not (to repeat) to try to show that the more things have changed, the more they stay the same. This is the line some so-called realists take, insisting on the unchanging dominance of power politics and the primacy of the balance of power. The historian should know better. Granting that grave international problems and dangers still exist or will arise, what sensible person would exchange the current problems for those of ten, fifty, or a hundred years ago, or insist that they are really still the same? The international historian can indeed identify certain roots and antecedents of the NWO in history, can even (in my view) show that it is not solely the product of the last twenty or fifty years, but the climax of a long historical development stretching back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet the very historical insight which sees the NWO as the fruit of a long evolution highlights the contrast between this era and the past, emphasizing how the NWO now enables statesmen to manage problems and maintain a stable international order in ways which statesmen of previous eras could only dream of. Denying the fundamental differences between the world orders of previous centuries and that of today is like denying the changes in medical science over the same period.<sup>3</sup>

Yet on the other side, the "realist" critics are right to claim that current ways of using and sustaining the NWO are not working well, and if pursued much longer may harm both the NWO and world peace. Once again special historical knowledge is not required to see this or understand the reasons; in fact, political and social science, international relations theory, practical experience in

international politics, and plain common sense work as well or better. The special contribution of history is first to point out that the idea of preserving peace and establishing a new international order through collectively enforcing international law against violators or imposing certain norms of international conduct on all actors, an old idea which goes back at least to the high Middle Ages and figures in most peace plans developed in the centuries since,<sup>4</sup> has regularly failed in history, proving ineffective and Utopian at best and productive of even greater violence and wider war at worst; and then to help show why the reasons for this persistent failure still prevail under the NWO today. The central reason, familiar to all scholars, is that making international politics into a confrontation between alleged lawbreakers and supposed enforcers of the law runs counter to the core of the international system which originated in Europe between the 15th and the 17th centuries and now embraces the whole world. That system, as the term "international politics" implies, presupposes the co-existence of independent states in juridically coordinate rather than superordinate and subordinate relations with each other, each claiming sovereignty, i.e., the sole right to proclaim and enforce the law within its own domains, and demanding recognition of that sovereignty from the others. Carried to its logical conclusion, the concept of the NWO as the collective enforcement of international law against transgressors fundamentally challenges and undermines this order, still the only one we have, and therefore must tend to provoke resistance and heighten conflict.

This shows up in international affairs in various ways, obvious and commonplace yet often overlooked. Tactically, this concept of "law enforcement" makes international confrontations and conflicts into something like a gunfight between the sheriff and the outlaws in a movie Western. Yet for purposes of limiting conflict and promoting peace in international affairs, force, if it is unavoidable, should be used as in judo rather than as in a gunfight. The object in judo, to use an aggressor's own force combined with a minimum effort of one's own to overbalance and disarm rather than destroy him, is better not only because it results in less violence and destruction, but also because a key assumption in an international system is that all essential actors should be preserved, because even an aggressive opponent, once curbed, has a necessary role to play. Psychologically,

when sanctions imposed by the international community are portrayed as enforcing the law against violators, the honor as well as the interests of the accused party are impugned, giving it additional incentives to resist (for a government that cannot defend its honor often quickly loses its power) and effective propaganda to rally domestic support against outsiders. (Precisely this has happened in the former Yugoslavia and Somalia.) Strategically, this outlook pulls the international community into pursuit of a vague, almost undefinable goal (when is the law sufficiently enforced, the lawbreaker adequately punished?). This raises the stakes for the international coalition in terms of its prestige and credibility, while leaving its means of enforcement limited and the concrete interests of its various members in the quarrel divergent--a sure prescription for disunity and defections. Juridically, it encourages challenges to the legitimacy of the action which an aggressor can easily exploit. Practically, it engenders disputes over meeting and sharing the costs and burdens of enforcement, and fears that enforcing the law will result in more suffering and damage than the original alleged violation did.

All this, added to the fundamental reluctance of states to acknowledge an authority higher than themselves and thereby implicitly surrender their right to judge and defend their own cause, makes it clear that the NWO, so long as it is conceived as a collective effort to compel compliance with international law or the will of the international community, faces grave obstacles.

The conclusion seems to represent an impasse. The NWO is real and vitally important, as its defenders insist; yet the measures it apparently requires are unworkable, counterproductive, and dangerous, as its critics claim. The way out calls for rethinking the NWO.

### C. The NWO: Not Compellence-Deterrence, but

#### Association-Exclusion

This rethinking begins with seeing that the NWO did not basically arise from successful compellence and deterrence, and does not mainly require these means to survive and work today. The account offered here of how the NWO actually was born and has worked is, like the whole essay, brief, oversimplified, and doubtless controversial, but it rests on well-known historical facts. The NWO as it emerged after World War Two was principally the product of a durable consensus

among a sizeable number of major states and smaller powers, mostly Western Europe and well developed politically and economically, that certain kinds of international conduct (direct military aggression and threats, the undermining of foreign governments by subversion, economic practices considered tantamount to economic warfare, and even some forms of civil war or internal oppression) had to be ruled out as incompatible with their general security and welfare. They formed various associations based on this consensus, designed both to deter external actions or threats of this kind and to promote a different kind of international conduct among themselves, i.e., to encourage political and economic cooperation and integration, expand trade and communication, resolve conflicts peacefully, and promote broad political participation, civil and human rights, and the economic and social welfare of the member states. The various associations and institutions created for these purposes (the Western European Union, Benelux, NATO, the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Community, EFTA, and others) proved over time not only durable, able to withstand external challenges and internal disintegration, but also successful in promoting prosperity, political stability, and democratic freedoms among the members themselves. As a result, these kinds of association promoting these patterns of conduct became a leading model for international politics in the developed world and much of the developing world, tending to pull other states toward it and to undermine associations and practices hostile to it.

The story is familiar; the historian's contribution is again to emphasize how new and unprecedented this development was and remains. A rough rule of thumb on alliances and associations in European international history is this: in the 17th century, all alliances worked almost purely as instruments of power politics, i.e., self-defense, war, and territorial expansion, even when ostensibly created for other purposes, e.g., religion or dynastic unions, and all were highly unreliable, no matter how solemnly sworn and guaranteed or expensively purchased with subsidies and bribes--so much so that it was impossible to calculate when or under what circumstances an ally was likely to defect. By the 18th century, alliances and associations, though still oriented almost exclusively to power politics, had grown more reliable, but not much more durable. They lasted only so long as they served the special interests of the contracting parties and so long as other more

profitable alliances were not available. Thus 18th century statesmen, in concluding alliances, had to try to calculate roughly when and under what circumstances an ally would defect. 19th and earlier 20th century alliances became much more durable, but still normally served the power-political ends of defense against enemies and acquisition of special advantages. Since they primarily served these purposes, their very durability and reliability, and the resultant rigidity of alliance systems, became a prime cause of war, especially World War One. With certain exceptions, it proved impossible in these earlier eras to erect and sustain durable, effective associations to promote the common good and general peace.<sup>5</sup> Only the late 20th century has seen durable international alliances and associations of a new kind, directed not simply against common dangers, but also for common constructive purposes; controlling the international conduct of the members themselves and making overt war among them unthinkable; valuable enough that members hardly think any longer of abandoning them, and that outsiders want to join them rather than weaken or break them up. More than anything else, it is this startling change in the structure, purposes, and uses of international alliances and associations which makes the NWO new.

In contrast, the collective action which supposedly gave birth to the NWO, the Gulf War, was not new at all. One can give the Bush administration full marks for skillful diplomacy in forming and sustaining the coalition. Nonetheless, this was normal, old-fashioned power politics, basically no different from other military coalitions against, for example, Louis XIV, Hitler, or Napoleon. Nor was it unique in its success. On Napoleon's return from Elba in 1815, in an era of much slower communications and inferior military technology, the allies formed an even wider coalition still more quickly and won a quicker, more brilliant, more complete, and more durable military success against a more serious foe.

To be sure, compellence and deterrence were not absent from the emergence and the operation of the NWO; some have claimed they were decisive in its creation. According to this view, united military action by a huge allied coalition destroyed Nazi and Japanese imperialism in World War II; military defeat and occupation plus forced democratization and economic liberalization transformed Germany and Japan; the threat of Soviet expansion and subversion compelled Western

Europe to integrate, and American leadership, economic aid, and military protection made that integration possible; the Western system of political and economic freedom was able to demonstrate its superiority over Communism only because NATO held the West together and kept Soviet imperialism at bay; and finally, it was American military and economic superiority that defeated the USSR in the Cold War, causing its internal change of course, the collapse of its empire, and the downfall of Communism itself in rapid succession.

The case looks plausible, but it rests on turning a contributing factor or, at most, a necessary but not sufficient condition in the rise of the NWO into the main cause. Compellence and deterrence may have been indispensable at certain points in the process, but their role was still an ancillary one. Force cleared away obstacles to positive changes; it did not produce the changes themselves, and carried too far, it could obstruct them. In exaggerating the role played by coercive force in building the NWO, this view obscures the real creative power behind it, which was a broad process of political and cultural learning. This process of collective learning shows most clearly in the defeated enemies of World War II, but it also worked profoundly throughout the Western community, and spread eventually far beyond it.

The process involved absorbing and internalizing two lessons. The first was a widespread recognition of failure, a realization that traditional ways of pursuing vital national and societal goals would not work, had intolerable consequences, and must be abandoned. The second involved devising other kinds of processes and institutions to achieve national goals that went beyond normal power politics, and deciding to try them. In a word, the NWO emerged when a critical mass of the international system's member states and peoples learned to repudiate the old power-political methods of achieving security and welfare and worked out new and different means for doing so.

This formula, though oversimplified, fits all the major post-World War Two achievements proving the NWO a reality--both those changes now permanent and irreversible (in Germany, Japan, Britain, France, other former colonial powers, Western Europe in general, and the Western Pacific rim), those changes underway in Eastern Europe, and those apparently starting in the Middle East, Africa, China, India and Pakistan, and Central and South America. In every case of such

collective learning, even where compellence and deterrence, coercive force, may have played a role, it was never decisive. Germany and Japan were not really forced by armed coercion to become democratic members of a liberal capitalist world system; they were rather brought by the hard experience of disastrous failure, including military defeat and occupation, to recognize that their former strategies of imperialism, militarism, and autarky could not make them secure, prosperous, and great. Presented with the chance to try an alternative route to security and prosperity, they chose to earn their way back into the international community by it. Many of the forcible measures originally proposed to transform Germany and Japan into safe members of the world community were, fortunately, never carried out--a sweeping partition and total demilitarization of Germany, its permanent de-industrialization, long-term control of German and Japanese education by outsiders, permanent controls on trade, abolition of the Imperial office in Japan, abolition of Shintoism as a state religion, and so on. The same point, that armed force, though needed to defeat their imperialist aggression, was not the main source of their collective learning, holds elsewhere. Great Britain was not compelled by outside force to give up its empire, not even in India. France was not forced out of Algeria--not by the Algerian rebels. France won the military war, and then abandoned the political one. The Soviet Union was not driven by force out of Afghanistan, and still less out of Eastern Europe or the various parts of its former empire, now independent. The United States was not really forced to abandon Vietnam or its military campaigns against Nicaragua and Cuba; not forced to recognize China or end the war in Korea. Change always reflected the same two-sided process of learning (even where it remained incomplete or dangerously reversible): the recognition that an old method, primarily resting on force, would not work or would cost too much or was too dangerous, and that another way was conceivable, and worth a try.

This will sound "soft" to any realist--idealistic in the bad sense, wet, sentimental, willfully ignorant of the realities of power and the need for coercion in international politics. Two comments: first, no one should allow so-called "realists" to define what is real and genuine in international politics, for nothing is more likely to make one miss what is deeply involved in it, and above all what is changing in it, than their kind of reductionism. Second, the coercion and pressure

clearly connected with the NWO from its beginnings and still involved in its operation is essentially different in kind and operation from power-political compellence and deterrence.

No one claims that these vast changes since World War II came about because governments, leaders, or peoples simply said to themselves, "What we are doing is not working. We need to try another way. Look at what the Americans or the West Europeans or the Japanese are doing; let's try that." Pressure and coercion were needed and frequently exerted, especially at critical points. What counts is the kind. It did not mean the use or threat of force to compel states to obey international law or deter them from breaking it. Instead, the pressure exerted consisted primarily of the members of the various associations discussed earlier combining the carrot of actual or potential membership with its attendant benefits with the stick of exclusion from the association with the attendant penalties and denial of benefits. This carrot and stick, group association with a promised payoff and exclusion with threatened denial, became the dominant form of sanctions in the development and operation of the NWO. Its psychological and political superiority over other approaches is easy to see. There is a major difference between in effect telling an opponent, or an ally threatening to defect and become an opponent, "Stop what you are doing or threatening to do, and do what we tell you instead, or we will punish you as a lawbreaker," and saying, "What you are now doing or threatening to do is going to fail and will eventually hurt you as well as us. The price of your continuing to try it will be to bar you from our group and cut you off from its benefits. But if you change your policy you can stay in the group, or keep your chance of joining it." It is just as easy to see the tactical, strategic, and economic advantages of this approach.

Again, it is clear that this kind of pressure actually promoted the NWO. Germany and Japan were compelled to become liberal and democratic not by force (a contradiction in terms in any case), but by the knowledge that this was the price of association with the West and its markets, military security, and respectability. Britain and France were not forced to decolonize by the United States; they were only taught, sometimes with brutal clarity as in the Suez Crisis of 1956, that they would lose the economic and political benefits of association with the United States if they did not. The United Kingdom was not forced into the European Common Market; it was merely compelled to

recognize that opposing it was futile and costly, and that it could enter only on Europe's terms, not its own. Superior Western military power did not force the Soviet Union and its former satellites first to revise and then to abandon their social and economic systems. Exclusion from Western technology, markets, and other desirable goods and the knowledge that they were losing the peaceful competition with the West without them was what mainly did it. Examples could be multiplied.

This form of international sanctions (association with benefits versus exclusion and denial) is not new in the sense of being unthought or untried earlier. The peace plans and dreams conceived in the 16th-18th centuries regularly summoned states, rulers, and peoples (at least all the right, qualified states, rulers and peoples) to unite in a permanent association for peace and share its benefits. The concept is therefore not new; what is new is its present effectiveness, its far greater power to reward and penalize without the overt use of force. Formerly the idea always foundered on the problem of sanctions, among other things: how to maintain the association, enforce its rules, and discipline wayward members or outlaws. Mere exclusion from the association was not enough, but the joint use of armed force against the offender (i.e., war) was impracticable and as harmful as the offense or worse. Only one previous international association, the post-1815 European Concert, succeeded for a time in keeping its great-power members and lesser states in line not primarily by military force and threats, but by the prospect of exclusion from the Concert and the European family of states with its benefits and privileges. But this too broke down in time, as some states like Austria and Russia ruined the Concert's attractiveness by tying it to their rigid and repressive purposes, while others like France, Sardinia-Piedmont, and Prussia developed aims in violation of the association's rules and therefore set out to wreck it, and still other leaders, especially Britain's Lord Palmerston, preferred balance of power confrontational tactics to the Concert strategy of grouping and joint pressure for conformity with group norms.<sup>6</sup>

Obviously the NWO today faces analogous dangers of ruin or repudiation. At the same time, the improved effectiveness, broader applicability, and greater durability of these non-forcible mechanisms of association and exclusion make it no longer Utopian to hope and work for their

indefinite duration and extension. In any case, in one sense we no longer really can choose in many instances to use this form of pressure or forcible compellence and deterrence instead. The very success which these mechanisms have had, not only in the so-called free world among our friends and allies, but also now in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, much of the Middle East, South Africa, Latin America, and other areas, has effectively deprived us of that choice. The fact that one country after another has opted to abandon rivalry with the so-called free world in favor of association with it makes it impossible to revert to cold war methods, even if we wanted to; we can only try to help make that choice work for them and us. This is really what "the end of the Cold War" means. Even where a confrontation in some form still persists, with Cuba, China, North Korea, and elsewhere, our best hopes for change and means to promote it are those of association-benefits/exclusion-denial. While the new methods cannot work quickly to end fighting already begun or control parties already locked in mortal combat over irreconcilable positions, as in former Yugoslavia and parts of the former Soviet Union, even here they are not useless. Ultimately the only kind of pressure and coercion helpful in producing a durable settlement is one which induces in all parties to recognize that violent solutions do not work in the long run, and that another way is open. (Witness the recent signs of a break in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab impasse.) This is what the NWO sanctions of association and exclusion are designed to do; the NWO not only enables us to use them, but almost compels us to do so.

#### D. Some Implications for Policy

Changing the way we think about the NWO and its operation affects our goals, priorities, and expectations in its regard. If it developed and works not by enforcing international law and punishing violators, but by forming and maintaining associations which reward those who conform to group norms and exclude those who do not, then the main goal of policy under the NWO should be sustaining this process of association and exclusion. This sounds like a mere truism, but has specific, important implications. It means that our prime concern in regard to the NWO should not be how it can be used in particular problem areas to advance particular ends, values, and interests, even vital ones like peace, democracy, and human rights, but rather to make sure that the NWO

itself is preserved and developed, for its own sake. The NWO, in other words, must be viewed as an end in itself, the necessary means and condition for other vital ends and values. We accept this logic in other contexts. We understand, for example, that the most basic concern in our domestic politics is upholding the Constitution and the democratic process, as the foundation for free domestic politics. We know that agreements and institutions like GATT, the IMF, the World Bank, the Group of Seven, and others have to be maintained not just to promote economic prosperity or cure hardship in our own country or others we care about, but as components of a world economic order vital for prosperity generally. The same principle applies to international relations: the NWO has intrinsic and not mere instrumental value.

This applies a fortiori to the associations which produced the NWO and make it effective. The UN, which once could be dismissed as merely a useful talking shop or meeting place handy for certain purposes, has become valuable in its own right as an integral part of the NWO. This is even more true of the narrower associations which have successfully kept their members in line and made others wish to join them; with the end of the Cold War they have become not less but more important in a practical, immediate way, and face major challenges of reorientation, consolidation, and expansion. The task most vital for the NWO today is not putting out brush fires around the globe--stopping civil war in Bosnia, starvation and clan warfare in Somalia, violations of UN sanctions in Iraq, or military gangsterism in Haiti--but securing the homestead and the animals in the corral, and expanding them to include more people and animals--keeping the European Community cohesive and attractive, NATO intact and functioning as a vehicle of integration and cooperation, the Japanese-American economic and political relationship stable, the progress of the Pacific Rim going, the world system of relatively free world trade working, and the East European and Russian road to freedom and prosperity open in the long run.

A recognition of the intrinsic value of the NWO and the need to strengthen it by preserving and developing the associations and mechanisms which support it suggests in turn a simple, practical rule of thumb for policy. Each time anyone proposes that the UN, the European Community, the United States and its allies, or some other international group carry out some

mission or measure in the name of the NWO, the first question must be: is this action compatible with the nature, central mission, and special methods of the NWO? If so, and if the mission is also desirable and practical per se, then it is worth considering; if not, then not. In other words, we must stop expecting and demanding that the NWO perform tasks it was not designed to do, which would wreck it if seriously tried, and then denouncing it or despairing of it when these missions are not undertaken or the effort fails.<sup>7</sup>

This happens repeatedly. The UN and/or some other international community or authority is constantly called on to intervene in civil wars and ethnic conflicts, restore civil order, alleviate starvation, break illegal blockades, settle territorial disputes, impose armistices on warring parties, stop internal oppression and violations of civil rights, establish war-crimes tribunals and punish war criminals, punish countries for defying UN resolutions or supporting terrorism, etc.--on the tacit assumption that the NWO makes these tasks necessary and possible. Name any international evil or problem, and it is a safe bet that someone has called on the NWO to solve it, and denounced the world community or proclaimed the demise of the NWO for its failure to do so. Such proposals, as already noted, are often resisted on practical grounds, especially their costs and risks for the United States, but little or nothing is said about their appropriateness for the NWO, and the effects of burdening it with assignments unsuited to its mission and methods.

This perspective also calls for some faith in the NWO and patience with the process of association and exclusion by which it works, and for allowing it sufficient time and steady application to work. It is simply unreasonable to argue, for example, that if there were a real NWO the international community would long since have acted to bring the fighting in Bosnia to an end, stop "ethnic cleansing" and other atrocities, relieve the suffering of civilians, settle territorial and other disputes, and create or salvage a viable Bosnian state. It is possible to argue that more could have done earlier to achieve these ends through diplomacy or other means, or to argue in reply that these goals were out of reach from the beginning, given the circumstances and the attitudes and aims of the various parties involved. In any case, regardless of their inherent desirability or undesirability, feasibility or unfeasibility, these are not now and never were the kinds of tasks the

NWO is designed or suited to carry out, and they must not be made the test of its existence and worth. An understanding of how the NWO emerged and what it can do precludes expecting it to be able to force warring sides to a negotiated settlement, or try and punish war criminals, or compel determined governments and armies to give up their conquests, or restore a territorial or political settlement already overthrown by force.

This does not make the NWO useless in situations like Bosnia--only different in its operation and functions. The real task of the NWO in Bosnia and the Balkans as a whole, and the real, legitimate test of its existence and worth there, lie ahead of it, after the current conflict has somehow been "settled". The test will then be whether Serbia and Croatia, winners in this struggle, come in five or ten years to be sorry that they ever waged it and desperate to escape its long-range consequences. The task and function of the NWO will be to make both states pay a high price after their victory for their policies of aggression and ethnic cleansing, in terms of indefinite exclusion from membership in the European and international communities and denial of the benefits of participation. This exclusion should specifically aim to bring home to them the long-run results of their adherence to 19th-century authoritarian-nationalist Greater-Serbian and Greater-Croatian ideologies in constructing their states; to teach them by hard experience, by the ruin of their economies and the loss of European and international recognition and status, that Europe and the developed world no longer work this way, and that without membership in the UN, ties to the European Community, and participation in the benefits of these associations--commerce, technology, academic and cultural exchange, tourism, foreign investment, international sports, etc.--their victory will not keep life in Serbia and Croatia from becoming increasingly intolerable. The hoped-for outcome will be the repudiation by the Serbian and Croatian governments and peoples themselves of the ideologies, leaders, and policies that led them into this.

The collective learning this calls for, a change in the prevailing Serb and Croat political culture, will not come easily, especially in Serbia; but it is the right and necessary goal. As the whole history of this region down to the present time testifies, no defeat of the Serbian forces by some outside military force, even if it were possible to achieve, would solve the central problem in former

Yugoslavia, for it lies not in the policies and actions of certain leaders, but in the persistent sway of Great Serb and Croat nationalism over too many of their peoples. A defeat and settlement imposed by outside force will not cure this evil, and could worsen it. A "negotiated" settlement of the territorial conflict, even if it stops the fighting and saves some sort of Muslim Bosnian state, could exacerbate the root problem by rewarding Serb and Croat expansionist nationalism. The only genuine remedy, especially now that the Serbs and Croats have won, is to make them ultimately regret their victory and want to change course to escape its long-term consequences, and this only a long-term policy of exclusion and denial can accomplish.

Just how a strategy of exclusion-denial could best be implemented is a question for current experts and practical policymakers, but it cannot be dismissed with the common offhand remark, "Sanctions don't work." The general answer, to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw on Christianity, is that sanctions have not mostly been tried and found wanting, but found difficult or inconvenient and not tried. Where seriously tried, especially in recent decades, sanctions of this kind have often worked--in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, South Africa, the Palestine Liberation Organization, even Vietnam. The policy would require no overt military force and little sacrifice or exertion from Europe or the world community. Its use here against small countries with economies already bad (Croatia) or desperate (Serbia) would improve its prospects of long-term success. Besides, this application of association/benefits and exclusion/denial would say something useful to everyone involved, not just Serbia and Croatia. Even if they resist the learning process, what is happening to them will have salutary effects on their neighbors (Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc.), as other South Asian countries have learned from the experience of Burma and Vietnam, or other Latin American ones from that of Cuba, or other Arab and Middle Eastern states from that of Iraq and Iran.

In any case, the final test for the NWO in Bosnia is not whether this strategy ultimately works as desired, but whether the European powers and others, including the United States, are willing seriously to try it. The fact that the UN's peacemaking efforts have failed to this point is irrelevant, proves nothing as to the reality and effectiveness of the NWO. Should the international

community fail to use its weapons of association and exclusion against Serbia and Croatia once the fighting is over, however, this would raise grave doubts about its reality and effectiveness, signal clearly that the United States and other leading states do not understand the NWO or trust its efficacy, and prefer the old power politics instead.

#### E. Some Objections

Certain criticisms of this view need some brief discussion, less to refute them than to avoid misunderstandings and correct false impressions.

One has surely already been answered: that this policy is soft and sentimental, ignoring the harsh realities of international politics to rely on sweet reason and moral suasion for peace and stability. A policy which subordinates the promotion of justice, civil and human rights, international law, the prevention of innocent suffering, and even the prevention of local wars to the maintenance of a particular impersonal system and process in international politics, and which expressly advocates the exclusion of successful aggressors from the international community and the imposition of a heavy price for their policies on their peoples, is instead if anything too ruthless and hard-boiled.

A more plausible objection is that this reflects an academic concept of how human beings learn and the world works, a belief that history can teach peoples and states the errors of their ways and induce them to change, when in fact people generally learn what they want to from history, mostly the wrong things or nothing at all, and some leaders in particular (Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic, for example) are totally indifferent to "lessons of history," care little or nothing about the costs of their failures so long as they do not have to pay themselves, and can keep their state machines and essential followers under control while making the masses pay and deceiving them into blaming the outside world for their sufferings.

This sounds good, but it misreads the message. This is not at all an argument that we should let history teach Saddam Hussein or Milosevic that aggression does not pay. Of course history, left to itself, does not work well this way. It can indeed "teach" whatever lessons one wants it to, including the lesson that aggression does pay. The argument instead is that under the NWO we can

now do what past generations could not: deliberately make history serve our purposes, acting in deliberate, organized fashion to induce whole governments and peoples to recognize failure and want change, by means other than external armed force. The desired outcome is not a sort of moral and religious repentance and conversion, the conviction that ethnic and religious conflict is wicked and that living together in peace and mutual tolerance is good. Of course many peoples resist learning this from history; the past which all too many of them know, cling to, and insist on living in often teaches an opposite lesson. As the historian Lewis B. Namier remarks, Freud's definition of neurosis, to be "dominated by unconscious memory, fixated upon the past, and unable to overcome it" is the regular condition of historical communities<sup>8</sup>--an insight illustrated by many trouble spots of today, including the Balkans. Instead, the strategy of exclusion and denial is a way of helping states and peoples to get over their history, break out of it. Repeated, long-term experience of failure is a powerful teacher, above all of the insight that unless one breaks with the past, there can be no tolerable present or future.

3) The most powerful criticism, however, is the charge of ineffectiveness. The incentives and sanctions provided by this version of the NWO, association-benefits and exclusion-denial, seem to many simply too weak to be relied on for a stable world order. They will not work against dictators like Saddam Hussein, ruling by military force and terror over a cowed populace, or against fanatical or desperate peoples, groups, and organizations of all kinds, including Great Serb nationalists, Croatian terrorists, religious fundamentalists, and more. They will not stop civil wars, settle serious territorial disputes, or curb terrorism. Besides being too weak, they act too slowly to prevent aggressions like the invasion of Kuwait, or avert developments too dangerous to be tolerated, like the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by a Saddam Hussein or a Muammar Gaddafi or the spread of Serb aggression and ethnic cleansing from Bosnia to the Kosovo region or Macedonia, or stop horrors impossible for the civilized world to tolerate, like genocide or mass starvation. In other words, though these so-called NWO mechanisms may work with reasonably mature, developed, peaceful states, they cannot handle the real problems of a still-violent, hostile, chaotic world, which require either the old instruments of individual state action and power politics,

or newer ones of effective forcible sanctions imposed by the international community through the UN, or a combination of the two.

Much of this has already been conceded; a main argument here has been that there are many tasks the NWO cannot do, and should not be expected or asked to. A further concession (critics might say a disabling one) can be added: in cases where an evil or danger clearly and directly threatens the general peace and the continued existence and operation of the whole international system, so that it has to be averted promptly at all costs, forcible sanctions are in order. But this admission does not affect the main case. The claim that the rewards and sanctions of association-benefits and exclusion-denial are ineffective can be answered on three levels: first, ineffective for what purposes, to what ends? Second, ineffective within what time frame? Finally, ineffective compared to what?

As to the first, of course these rewards and sanctions will not fulfill some desired purposes and ends in international politics. Neither will armed force. The question is which is more useful under more circumstances for more important goals, at a more acceptable cost. Under the NWO, the costs attached to the use of armed force have gone steeply up, both absolutely and in ratio to the benefits achieved, and the chances of meaningful success have diminished. In fact, the NWO adds new costs to the familiar risks, blood, lost treasure, diverted resources, and ancillary destruction entailed by the use of force--an opportunity cost in terms of opportunities lost, things that can no longer be done in international politics once force has been used. To use armed force against an international transgressor like Serbia or Iraq is not a way of teaching it the same lessons about international association and cooperation as are intended by the tactics of association/benefits and exclusion/denial, only more quickly and effectively. Instead, trying to "teach" these lessons by armed force obstructs teaching or learning them by the other route at all, as our current experiences in Iraq, Bosnia, and Somalia indicate and many historical examples attest. The more the lesson desired is inflicted by external armed force, the less the experience of defeat and failure is likely to be internalized in a useful way and lead to the kind of durable change desired. Furthermore, every resort to armed force willy-nilly teaches us and other peoples the retrograde lesson that the NWO

and its methods cannot be trusted in critical cases to get the job done--a self-fulfilling prophecy. In other words, on the basis of a sensible, comprehensive cost-benefit analysis, the NWO and its methods are not only not generally ineffective; they are for most useful purposes in international politics far better and cheaper than the coercive force.

Second, as has been said, most of the aims for which the NWO methods of association and exclusion are admittedly ineffective--enforcing international law, reversing historic wrongs, stopping civil wars, imposing territorial settlements in bitterly disputed cases, punishing international crimes and criminals--are usually not achievable by force or any other methods either, at least not durably or at any reasonable cost. This is the real lesson of Bosnia and Somalia. The argument here has been that these goals are not the most important or desirable ones to pursue under the NWO, and not worth achieving at the cost of others. For evidence that association and exclusion are highly effective in reaching the goals most central and important to the NWO, rewarding international cooperation and inducing aggressors and troublemakers to recognize failure and change course, one need only look at the long list of states since 1945 which gambled that they did not need to participate in the mainstream of international commerce, industry, technology, communications, travel and tourism, exchange of information, international capital, etc., for success and prosperity, or that they could participate in these on their own terms. Most of these states have signally failed in the attempt, and those which have not are struggling.

The same answer applies to the question, "Effective how fast, in what time frame?" Certainly the learning process needed to bring states and peoples into the NWO takes time. No one can expect important, durable changes in collective mentality and political culture to happen quickly. Hence an aggression that must be stopped immediately, a crisis that cannot be allowed to erupt into war, or atrocities simply too horrible to be allowed to continue may require something quicker--with the strictures and reservations discussed above. Yet (to reiterate) among the new capacities of the NWO is the capacity to speed up such changes and make them more predictable than in the past. International history used to be an ironic illustration of the Old Testament saying that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation. It took generations for

peoples not only to become aware of the full consequences of past policies, but even to recognize past follies as such. The militarism and aggression of Frederick the Great's policies bore their full fruit for Prussia only in Napoleon's time; the consequences of Bismarck's founding of the Second Reich in 1871 took till 1919 and 1945 to be fully clear. Now we have seen two systems in West and East Germany judged by everyone within one generation. The acceleration of history and the enormous increase in speed and ease of communication in our time makes it reasonable to expect children see and repudiate the sins of the fathers while the fathers are still around.

One more objection to this view of the NWO and the way it should be used is, if true, unanswerable: that this way of conceiving and managing the NWO does not fit the American character and political system. It requires patience, steady attention to the long view, a willingness to wait for results, and the ability to adjust to changed reality and to accept blurred, complex, uncertain outcomes and live with them if they are the best attainable--all virtues which the American public does not possess and the American political system, focussed on domestic concerns, immediate issues, simple solutions, and clear-cut moral dichotomies, neither teaches to voters nor rewards in politicians.

It is not clear to me that so sweeping an indictment of American political culture and its effects on international politics is justified. Americans, both leaders and the public, have over the last fifty years or so shown in some instances a striking ability to learn, adjust, stay the course, and adapt to change in the international arena--witness their support to Israel, commitment to NATO, general maintenance of free trade, and acceptance of relative failure and the limits to American power in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere. Yet it may be that calling on Americans to accept this version of the NWO and lead it (for who else can?) means calling for an America different from the existing one--less prone to violence at home and abroad, less shortsighted about its own interests and those of other states, less provincial and ignorant about the rest of the world, and less insistent that in dealing with any crisis it call the shots and that, if it decides to get in, other states must help it get the job done quickly and get out. Clearly the NWO cannot work under this kind of leadership or these conditions. Even more important, this attitude on the part of many Americans is

incompatible with what international politics has essentially become under the NWO and what it must further develop into--a collective learning process, a change of collective mentalities and political cultures involving whole nations and peoples, enabling them to adjust to each other successfully in a new order. Americans need to be part of this learning process as much as other peoples, perhaps in some respects more. We deny this cardinal need and responsibility whenever we say in effect, "The United States cannot follow this or that policy in international affairs, even though it is necessary and legitimate, because the American people will not support it and the American political system makes it impossible to sell it to them." What we really say by this is that we want to run the NWO and enjoy its benefits, but not belong to it, or change and grow with it. In other words, we are stupid and inconsistent, and prefer to stay that way. A nation which uses that excuse for very long must sooner or later excuse itself into disaster.

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<sup>1</sup>. This essay was first written while I was a Jennings Randolph Peace Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, whose support is here gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>2</sup>. Roger Kanet and Edward A. Kolodziej, eds., *The Cold War as Cooperation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup>. In a forthcoming book, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) I argue that the Congress of Vienna transformed international politics in 1814-15, producing a new international system much more peaceful and stable than any previous one, with resemblances to the current NWO in certain respects. I would argue just as strongly, however, for the superiority of the current NWO over the Vienna system in providing

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solutions to various problems which the Vienna system only dimly foreshadowed.

<sup>4</sup>. See, for example, Jacob van Meulen, *Der Gedanke der Internationalen Organisation in seiner Entwicklung 1300-1800* (The Hague, 1917), or F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (2 vols., Cambridge, England, 1963).

<sup>5</sup>. Even the two most important exceptions really prove the rule. The German Confederation of 1815-66 was originally founded both to provide for the common defense of its members, the various independent German states, and to promote their joint welfare in various ways. Yet its leaders, especially Austria, quickly stultified its potential for advancing the general welfare, for particular Austrian reasons, and after 1848 it could no longer even serve for common defense and for reconciling power-political differences between its members, especially Prussia and Austria. Similarly, the European Concert worked well from 1815 to 1853 to preserve international peace, but mostly failed as a way of promoting a common approach to more general European political and social problems.

<sup>6</sup>. See Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* (Hanover, NH, 1985); Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongress zur Pariser Konferenz* (Göttingen, 1991); Winfried Baumgart, *Der Friede von Paris* (Wiesbaden, 1972); and my own *Austria, Great Britain and the Crimean War* (Ithaca, NY, 1972).

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<sup>7</sup>. This view rejects, to be sure, the widespread condemnation of the international community for not stopping the current fighting and atrocities in Bosnia. Istvan Deak, a renowned historian at Columbia University, for example, concluded a series of review articles on recent works on the Holocaust in the New York Review of Books (Nov. 5, 1992) by remarking that the undertaking had left him with "a sense of hopelessness" at the refusal of states and peoples to learn from the Holocaust--a refusal which the "international failure to act" in the face of ethnic cleansing and other horrors in Bosnia demonstrates.

Deak and others are entirely right to remind us that human beings are still capable of bestial conduct, and that many individuals and groups have refused to learn from the Holocaust and other acts of genocide, or learned the wrong things. To ascribe the ongoing tragedy in Bosnia simply to an "international failure to act", however, is a mistake. It misunderstands the nature of the NWO and its methods, as already argued; it underestimates the real, formidable obstacles to any kind of international action capable of preventing or ending this kind of warfare in this region as in many others; and above all it ignores the huge difference between the international response to these particular Balkan horrors and the historic responses to all earlier ones. Central to all previous international responses to internecine Balkan conflicts has been the primary concern of the great powers to safeguard their individual great-power interests,

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spheres of influence, and positions of power within the region. Even where, as often happened, the great powers did not mainly try to exploit the conflicts for selfish ends but cooperated to regulate and end them, they always were concerned to preserve a favorable balance of power.

The most obvious feature of the current international response is that this long-dominant motive has almost totally disappeared. States that formerly would never have allowed the Balkan balance to shift fundamentally against them--Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Russia--now would prefer to ignore the struggle entirely, and intervene if at all primarily for peacekeeping and humanitarian reasons. A frequent argument for forcible intervention in Bosnia is that the conflict should be stopped to prevent it from spreading into a wider Balkan conflict that could trigger another wider war like World War One, touched off precisely in this area. The danger of a Balkan ripple effect is no doubt serious and important; the danger of another 1914 has virtually disappeared, because the general outlook prevalent in 1914 among all the powers, great and small, that the Balkans were vital to the general European and world balances has disappeared. It is one thing to emphasize the tragedy of the current situation for Bosnians and many others on all sides; another to claim that unless the international community under the NWO does something immediately effective to fix it, the NWO is useless and the world has learned nothing. This very situation, for all its horrors,

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proves that the international community, especially in Europe, has learned something, changed for the better.

<sup>8</sup>. "History," in Fritz Stern, ed. *Varieties of History* (New York, 1956), 375.

