

Reason

FREE MINDS & FREE MARKETS

FINDING OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

FOREIGN POLICY
AFTER THE COLD WAR

WITH
TED CARPENTER
BENJAMIN FRANKEL
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER
JOSHUA MURAVCHIK
DANIEL PIPES



TAXES AND DEATH:
A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

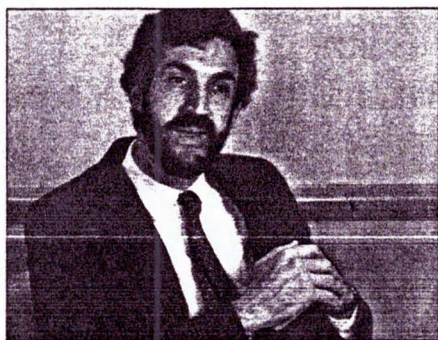


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Free Minds and Free Markets

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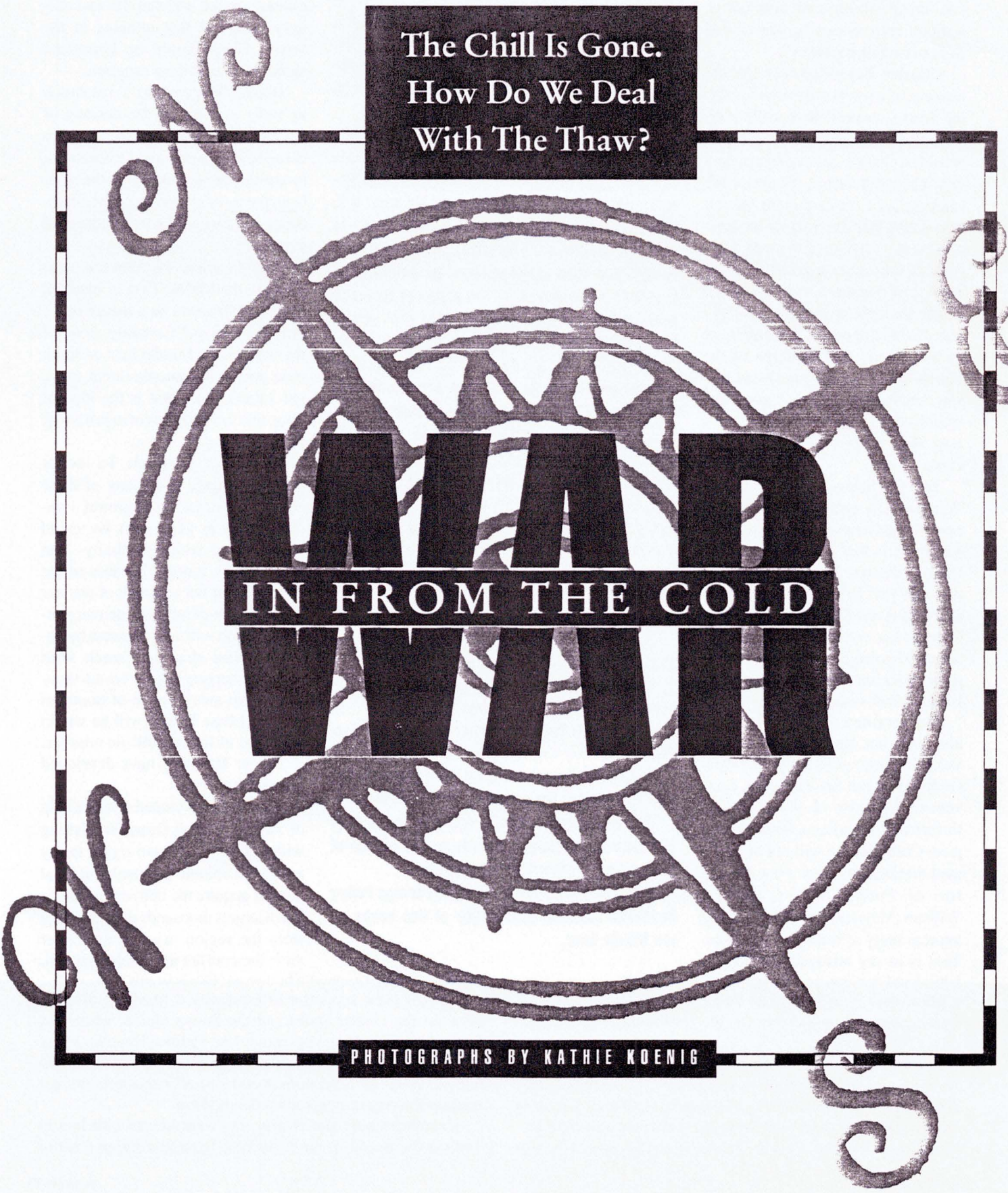
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The Chill Is Gone.
How Do We Deal
With The Thaw?



WIND
IN FROM THE COLD
WIND

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHIE KOENIG

Virginia Postrel: Where is the world headed in the post-Cold War era, in the absence of political or military intervention by the United States or other countries?

Charles Krauthammer: In the absence of a world order imposed by the West—because there really is no one else to impose it—I think it would be chaotic, and highly dangerous. The most salient feature of the international environment in the post-Cold War era will be the possession of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them by a range of countries, some of which will be unstable, aggressive, and reckless. Saddam Hussein is a harbinger of that. He is the prototype of the threat. Oil states can accelerate history because they can acquire vast wealth and import technology in a way that other smaller countries can't.

Ted Carpenter: The post-Cold War world is going to be a classic case of good news and bad news. The bad news is that it is going to be a terribly disorderly place regardless of what the United States does. I don't think the United States or any other power, or probably any combination of powers, will be able to impose order on this rather fractious international system.

The good news is, though, that we also will not have to deal with a would-be hegemonic rival like Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. Consequently, most of the so-called threats that we will encounter in the post-Cold War era will not be pertinent threats, but rather what the editor of *Foreign Policy*, Charles William Maynes, has described so appropriately as impertinent threats. That is to say annoyances, a lot of petty local and regional quarrels and conflicts that do not have a great deal of relevance to America's own vital interests. Consequently, it is possible for the United States to adopt a rather aloof strategy.

Daniel Pipes: I think it is premature to dismiss the Soviet Union as a potential hegemonic power. While it is certainly true that there have been stunning changes in the Soviet Union in the last couple of years and that today the Soviet power projection is nothing like what it was just months ago, it is also

Foreign-policy discussions, especially when confined to TV talk shows or newspaper editorial pages, tend to take on a ritualistic flavor. People intone familiar arguments, divide into familiar sides. Rarely do they uncover each other's core assumptions or provoke one another—or the observer—to reconsider old ideas.

Yet with Cold War verities no longer certain, serious discussion is more important than ever. To that end, REASON gathered a group of foreign-policy analysts to discuss and debate what U.S. policy should be in the post-Cold War era—to address each other directly, to explore differences and find similarities, to reveal one another's premises about the shape of things to come and American ability to alter that shape. Our goal (though not necessarily that of the participants) was not to come to any particular conclusion. It was to challenge our readers to think about their own ideas on the subject.

Thinking about foreign policy is especially difficult, and important, for people who value individual liberty. By its very nature, foreign policy involves collective, not individual, action; in the modern world, it is conducted by nation-states. In the realm of foreign policy, not only action but inaction can have serious and unforeseen consequences. Here, we begin a discussion that will continue in future issues of REASON.

Our symposium was held in Washington, D.C., in early December. The participants were:

- **Ted Galen Carpenter, director of foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute;**
- **Benjamin Frankel, editor of *Security Studies*;**
- **Charles Krauthammer, a syndicated columnist who writes frequently on foreign policy;**
- **Joshua Muravchik, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and author of the new book *Exporting Democracy*;**
- **Daniel Pipes, director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and author of five books on the Middle East.**

possible that it may be transient. It may be that a strongman will emerge, military or not, and that the vast military potential that remains in the Soviet Union could be harnessed again to an ambitious program.

Joshua Muravchik: I was struck in Ted's remarks by the absence of gradations. Is there nothing that lies between on the one hand a hegemon, or aspiring hegemon, and on the other hand the most inconsequential disturbance somewhere in some corner of the earth?

Would nuclear war between some states in the Middle East or between India and Pakistan be a matter of indifference to us? Certainly, none of the states in the Middle East or South Asia pose a hegemonic threat to us, but I don't think that is the kind of thing that we would want to just shrug off.

Benjamin Frankel: In some measure I agree that many of these local conflicts, or regional conflicts—that in years past we could have ignored with equanimity—can no longer be ignored because of the development not so much of nuclear weapons, but of missiles, delivery vehicles. India will soon possess ballistic missiles that can reach with accuracy targets six or seven thousand miles away—most of Southern Italy and East Turkey will be within the range of Indian ballistic missiles.

Pipes: That they have developed themselves?

Frankel: Developed with the help of Argentina; and Brazil is working with Pakistan. All I am trying to say is that the minute regional and local powers acquire the delivery means to reach targets thousands of miles away from the region, we can no longer view the conflict as merely regional,

because it might expand whether we like it or not.

I was a great supporter of bipolarity. I liked the division between the United States and the Soviet Union, where the Soviet Union could control people like Saddam Hussein. Many of the people who got armed to the teeth during the Cold War remain with their large arsenals and immoderate ambitions, but without the superpowers to moderate them.

Krauthammer: But clearly Iraq went to war with Iran in 1980 at the height of the Cold War. Syria and Egypt went to

war against Israel in '73 while Syria was a client of the Soviets. Israel as a client of the U.S. has not always behaved the way America wants. So there was somewhat of a moderating influence, but it wasn't an absolute one, or in any way decisive.

In the absence of the Cold War rivalry, countries like Iraq are somewhat free to act. However, they face now what could be a coalition of great powers—the United States, the Soviets, Western allies. These small countries can now be absolutely stopped in their tracks, or almost totally restrained, in a way that they could never be when every country had a patron.

Pipes: I would challenge Ben to come up with cases where the bipolarity really served as a moderating force.

Frankel: Some 40 or 50 countries have been able over the last 40 years to develop nuclear weapons. Only nine did, five overtly, four covertly. The most important variable for countries that did not go ahead with their own nuclear weapons was the security guarantee given them by the United States or the Soviet Union—countries like Taiwan, South Korea, Japan.

Almost by definition, in a multipolar world, countries do not give credible guarantees to their clients and clients do not take these guarantees as credible, simply because alliances shift constantly. In a multipolar world, a country like South Korea, believing itself to face a huge adversary to the north—China and North Korea—is not going to take a guarantee by Britain, or Western Europe, or Germany to be as credible as a U.S. guarantee in a bipolar world. Which leads me to the conclusion that one of the things we are going to see within the next 10 to 15 years is a very rapid and intense proliferation of nuclear weapons, initially for defensive purposes. Most of the countries which will acquire nuclear weapons face very large conventional adversaries, and they cannot compensate for this conventional disparity.

William Safire only last week wrote about Saudi Arabia very delicately engaging in negotiations with China to acquire a couple of nuclear bombs for defensive purposes when we withdraw our 400,000 troops. We are going to see a world in which ancient rivalries and regional conflicts, which have been somewhat subsumed under the East-West conflict, come to the fore again. But this time the local participants are equipped—initially, for defensive purposes—with nuclear weapons.

Carpenter: We are certainly going to see a period of greater proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, not just nuclear weapons, but also chemical and biological arsenals. But, to me, that is an argument for the United States not to try to play the role of

planetary policeman. The only thing that I would regard as more unwise than intervening in a regional conflict between conventionally armed powers would be to intervene in a conflict where the parties have nuclear capability.

Krauthammer: We should try to use the next decade or two of unipolarity to make sure that the multipolar world—which is inevitable in a generation or two—is not going to be a world of utter chaos. That must not be a world, as Ted implies, where the regional powers are going to be facing each other, everybody armed with nuclear weapons. We have a chance for a decade or two to impose a regime which would obviate that.

We can make an example of Iraq. I think we will set back this day of universal proliferation quite a long time, and our weight will be respected throughout the world, whereas it will not be if we withdraw and surrender in the Gulf. It doesn't have to be with our military might. It might happen through surrender without firing a shot. But if we make an example of Iraq, and people know that there is a policeman in the world, then I think we can create in this unipolar moment a world order which would make the world a hell of a lot safer.

Carpenter: I think that is an admirable objective, but it is a profoundly dangerous illusion. We have to assess what kind of policy the American political and economic system will support, and I don't think there is sufficient

domestic support now, or in the foreseeable future, for the United States to play the role of planetary policeman.

I think the Bush administration is beginning to find that out in the Persian Gulf crisis. Yes, it is wonderful if we can achieve our objectives there, or anywhere else in the world, without having to fire a shot. But a nation cannot make a commitment on the basis of a bluff. If our measures short of war fail to attain the requisite goal, we are going to be faced with the probability of having to go in militarily and, again, I think that is quite clear in the case of the Persian Gulf.

Muravchik: Charles, I would like to hear you elaborate on why you assume that American hegemony can only last a decade or two.

Krauthammer: Well, I am not assuming it. I am preparing for the worst. It is clear that we are hegemonic now. There is no second-rank power. I am assuming that over the next decade, or two, or three, other powers will catch up. It is hard to predict who it will be. Everybody assumes Germany and Japan, but their performance on the Gulf was so scandalously timid that it is not clear that they will ever want to translate economic into geopolitical power.

It would be nice if we continued for the next century or two to have a uni-



“Regimes which rest on the consent of the governed...are more likely to be peaceful and law-abiding.”

—JOSHUA MURAVCHIK



polar system in which, perhaps, instead of one chairman, we have a central committee of great powers. If so, let's set up that structure gradually over time, and let's act in the next decade or two, while we are fairly independent in what we can do, to set an example of how a hegemonic unipolar system ought to work in controlling the regional outbreaks in the world and in keeping the peace.

Postrel: To sustain your vision of the unipolar world, what does the United States do?

Krauthammer: It does, in crises that affect the world, in particular the U.S. and its allies, what it has done in the Gulf. It deploys its economic, political, and military assets in a way to impose its will—let's not be nice about this—on recalcitrant actors who threaten the world system in some way.

It doesn't have to have structures. This time we improvised by using the U.N. structure. That is a little bit constraining, but fine. And, perhaps, over time a U.N. structure, or a NATO/CSCE structure of some sort, can evolve in Europe. It doesn't quite matter what the institutional structure is. What is important is the will. If we have the will to impose our will, as we are doing in the Gulf, in other places where it counts, and we lead where others may or may not follow, then things will get done. Otherwise, we are going to have our multipolar world tomorrow, if we withdraw. And I think all hell is going to break loose if that happens.

Frankel: When we struggled with the Soviet Union over interests, we tried to bring liberalism, democracy, some more humane governments to those countries we were interested in, especially in the '70s and '80s. I think that our role in that unipolar world will be much more limited to preserving the rules of the game. If you have a very nasty person who plays by the rules, I wouldn't rush in to replace him, or subvert his regime, or what-have-you.

Krauthammer: I would go along with that.

Frankel: Because, again, as the Soviet Union's influence recedes, I believe we will have many ancient conflicts coming to the surface again, as in Eastern Europe. We will have our hands full if we rush into every trouble spot around the world.

Krauthammer: I am not for changing the government of Zaire.

Frankel: Or the government in Hungary if it goes to war with Romania. All I am trying to say is, against the background of some very real economic problems at home, we have to define precisely what it is that we should do. And I say maintain the rules of the game.

Muravchik: If you want to set as objective number one a



“We are going to revert to a semi-anarchic form of multipolarity ...exacerbated by the spread of weapons of mass destruction.”

—BENJAMIN FRANKEL



world of law, that goal is a very worthwhile goal in itself. It is one that the United States has pursued and ought to pursue irrespective of the nature of individual regimes. However, I would argue that there is a second valid goal—not in conflict with that first goal—which is a world consisting of the kind of regimes that by our values we regard as legitimate, namely regimes which rest on the consent of the governed. We have a great body of historical evidence that shows us that regimes of that type are more likely to be peaceful and law-abiding, so pursuing the second goal may well help us in pursuing the first.

I would perfectly well grant—Charles threw out the example of Zaire—that there are any number of countries in the world where the prospects for democratic government sustaining itself at this moment are poor. Even in those countries, I am eager to encourage steps which would make those prospects better. Certainly we serve no purpose if we blindly seek to overthrow dictatorial regimes merely because they are dictatorial without paying some attention to what is likely to replace them. But given that caveat of prudence, I think that the general principle of doing what we can to encourage the proliferation of regimes that rest on the consent of the governed is complementary to striving for a world in which all regimes obey certain rules of law.

Postrel: If you like democracy in Zaire, what gives you the right to decide that Joe Jones in Kansas ought to pay for your fomenting of democracy in Zaire, even assuming that you could be successful at it?

Muravchik: The right seems to me perfectly clear: We are a nation, we have an agreement that there are such things as common purposes, and we have a system of government which is predicated on the idea that if a majority, through our processes of government, decides that certain purposes are in the common interest, such as giving welfare to poor people, or—

Krauthammer: Going to the moon.

Muravchik: Or going to the moon, or whatever in foreign policy, and as long as these common purposes don't involve curtailing the rights of our own citizens, but involve only taxing them, making them contribute some money, it is fundamental to our way of government that we have the right to do that.

Now, ought we do it? I think we ought to do it because it is good, and our common purposes ought to include a certain regard for the well-being of other people. Also, I would argue that we ought to do it because the world is likely to be more benign and more peaceful if it is a world in which democratic

governments proliferate.

Carpenter: This tendency to focus on the "ought" is very insidious. It presumes that the foreign policy of the United States can be simply a wish list of desirable objectives without reference to the costs or the risks involved.

Those of us who favor a minimalist state have a special problem with an activist foreign policy. I find it extremely difficult to support the notion that we can maintain, or in our case actually create, a minimalist state at home while having a large, active, intrusive government abroad. That automatically requires a very large military, high levels of spending, high levels of taxation, not to mention the manifestations of the national-security state that we have had domestically in terms of civil liberties throughout the Cold War. These are very, very real costs.

Krauthammer: I am compelled to respond here on two issues. Number one, the actual cost of maintaining our hegemonic position in the world as outlined by Dick Cheney last year, projecting into 1995—now this is a conservative administration, so this is the outside high estimate—is we are now spending on defense 5.5 percent of GNP. By the mid-'90s that will be at 4 percent. That is astronomically low. It is about half of what was spent in Kennedy's time. It is our pre-Pearl Harbor level. It is certainly not the military-industrial state, or the national-security state that Ted is painting for us here. The cost for a maritime commercial republic—a country like ours dependent on open sea lanes, on open trade, on an open world—of retiring and letting all hell break loose will be far more than any of the actual costs spent on defense today.

Number two, historically this notion that activism abroad implies big government, intrusive government, at home is nonsense. The most active hegemonic power in the world in the 18th and 19th centuries was Britain. It was also the most liberal great power in the world.

Pipes: Ted, you used the word *minimalist* state. Surely you would agree that the first obligation of government is to protect its citizens, and that would be essentially the police force at home, and military force for abroad. That, I would argue, falls within the guidelines of a minimal state—not welfare, not transfer payments, not high taxation, but preserving our liberties, and our freedom of trade.

Carpenter: The problem is that individuals who favor a global interventionist policy define the notion of providing for the common defense in much the same way that those who favor the welfare state domestically define promoting the general welfare. It is so elastic that it tends to encompass everything. I agree, we certainly have to protect the American community, and it is going to be a very dangerous world out there, as it has been throughout most of this century. But we have to establish some sense of what constitute the vital interests of the United States, and not simply launch global crusades in pursuit of either this elusive goal of global stability, or for that matter to promote democracy abroad, however desirable either of those would be.

Pipes: Could you define vital interests?

Carpenter: America's vital interests encompass develop-

ments that have a direct, immediate, and substantial connection with America's physical survival, its political independence, and the liberties of the American people. Now, I will grant you, that still leaves considerable room for interpretation, but it is not a blank slate, as we have had for years.

Krauthammer: Given that definition of national interests, is preventing the oil reserves of the Arabian peninsula from coming under the control of a declared anti-Western dictator in the national interests of the United States—does it fall inside or outside of your definition?

Carpenter: In the first place, that depends on the costs and risks of securing that objective.

Pipes: No, that is a different question.

Carpenter: It can't be addressed aside from it, because every goal, in the abstract, might be desirable—

Krauthammer: Look, I am not saying every desirable goal ought to be pursued at any cost. You gave a definition of national interest. I am asking, In that definition does this example fall inside or outside? Then we can discuss the means of dealing with it.

Carpenter: I gave you the conceptual definition of what constitutes a vital interest. The operational definition, of course, is an interest for which the nation is prepared to go to war. In this case, the answer is no, we do not have sufficient interest at stake there to risk a major war in the region. The dominance that Iraq might be able to exercise over the oil supplies of the Middle East is quite limited—I do not believe that constitutes a vital interest of the United States.

Pipes: What about a Saddam Hussein with missile capabilities of 7,000 miles, or whatever?

Frankel: Which he may have in five years.

Carpenter: Which can be neutralized rather easily with an effective missile defense system.

Krauthammer: But you are saying that Saddam today, his control of the Arabian peninsula, is not a sufficient problem that it would rank as a threat to our national interests as defined by you.

Carpenter: That is correct. Saddam poses a regional threat. He does not pose a significant threat outside the region.

Krauthammer: And you see no connection between the security of this region and our national interests?

Carpenter: At most there is a peripheral connection, again, not worth assuming the risk of a major war.

Pipes: Do you see any interest on the horizon becoming vital, assuming that the Soviets are out of the game as our rival?

Carpenter: A possible rise of a would-be hegemonic power in Europe, or in the Pacific Rim, because of the economic importance of those regions. It depends, again, on the specifics of the case.

Pipes: So in the world today, the U.S. has no vital interests beyond its borders?

Carpenter: At present, we do not have interests that would require us taking the risk of war.

Krauthammer: When there was a hegemonic power opposing us in the world and threatening us daily—which you say if it happened in the future would create a circumstance in

which we would have a national interest outside our borders—did you support, for example, keeping our troops in Europe as a defense against this hegemon, or were you in favor of withdrawal?

Carpenter: My quarrel with U.S. policy during the latter stages of the Cold War was not that we did not have vital interests in Europe or the Far East, but that it was no longer necessary for the United States to treat the nations in these regions as protectorates, that they had substantial capabilities of their own to protect their own security interests, and they were simply free-riding on the United States.

Had I been around in 1948 or 1949, at the time that NATO was created, I would have supported the objective of halting Soviet expansionism. I would have, however, preferred a different mechanism, not an elaborate alliance that entangled us with long-term commitments, but rather the course that people like George Kennan and Chip Bohlen suggested of an American commitment to a European alliance, one which we then would be free to modify, or even repeal, if circumstances changed at some point.

Pipes: But in 1948, I think you would have argued that the Soviet Union was not a direct and immediate threat to the United States. After all, they did not have the weapons and the missiles that they later acquired. They were more like Iraq today.

Carpenter: No, because the Soviet Union in the late 1940s at least posed a plausible threat of dominating all of Europe, and conceivably moving into the Far East.

Pipes: So?

Carpenter: And those are regions that I do feel are important to America's security interests.

Pipes: But they are not direct or immedi-

Clockwise from left: Benjamin Frankel, Charles Krauthammer, Joshua Muravchik, Daniel Pipes, Ted Carpenter, and Virginia Postrel.



To what extent do commercial interests pull the U. S. and other trading countries into diplomatic and military entanglements?

ate. I mean, Europe could fall into Soviet domination, the Middle East can fall into Saddam's domination, what is the difference?

Carpenter: I think the shift of population and resources into the Soviet camp at that time, again, given the nature of the international system, would have posed a direct, immediate threat.

Pipes: Then you are allowing a special role for Western Europe and East Asia, a role that, for example, the Middle East doesn't have?

Carpenter: Those regions are considerably more important to our own security interests than the Middle East, or sub-Saharan Africa, or Southeast Asia, or Southwest Asia.

Pipes: I am sorry to keep drilling you like this, but then they fall under the rubric of direct, immediate threat—a direct, immediate threat to them is a direct, immediate threat to us?

Carpenter: Again, it depends on the power of the source of that threat. Given the size and capabilities of the Soviet Union, yes.

Pipes: This is far more subtle and elusive than your original definition was.

Krauthammer: That is a reasonable position.

When I heard you talk disparagingly of the national-security state, I was assuming that you thought we had created this state apparatus in response to sort of a phantom threat. But you are saying it was a real threat. And you say if a threat is not hegemonic then it really doesn't count. We have to worry about a hegemon, but anything short of that everybody can take care of themselves. That is our basic disagreement.

We have a really interesting division here of the goals of post-Cold War policy. We have Ted saying there really aren't any because the hegemon is out of the picture, so as of today it is sort of a quiet time. Josh is promoting the spread of democracies, and what I hear Ben promoting is a different agenda, which is, I guess, a kind of rule of law.

Frankel: Not a rule of law in the sense of the United Nations but—

Krauthammer: We promulgate the laws?

Frankel: Yes. There are certain rules, minimal.

Krauthammer: And I am not sure that I am looking for a systematic principle. I see our role a little ad hoc, identifying and facing threats. I am not sure we want to have hard-and-fast rules that whenever a country eats its neighbor we intervene. If Burundi invaded Rwanda, I wouldn't send American troops. The reason is that possession of Rwanda is

not something that will give Burundi a capacity to attack our vital interests, our friends, or ourselves.

In domestic law you have to have a universal principle. If somebody steals he goes to jail, no matter who steals. In international relations, you have to be a little bit more subtle, sophisticated, and cynical, and to say breaking the rules is perhaps a necessary condition of foreign intervention, but it is not sufficient.

Frankel: I fully agree. I have no intention for the United States to go to separate Burundi from Rwanda. To bring it closer to home, not even between Hungary and Romania. That is why I was not so worried about communists in Angola and Mozambique—what can they do to us, finally?

Krauthammer: But that is why the Wilsonian language that I hear from Bush scares me, because it opens him up to the argument, Where were you when East Timor was invaded? The answer is simple: Sorry. There are some places that we have to say, “We cannot be everywhere in the world.”

Carpenter: I would like to ask Ben and Charles a question in connection with their proposal for the United States, in essence, to protect the rules of the game. How do you prevent the problem that we have had throughout the Cold War period of other nations free-riding on our security guarantees?

Again, we see that in the Persian Gulf operation. George Bush is saying that it is the world versus Saddam Hussein, and there are 26 nations contributing to the multinational force in the Gulf. What he doesn't say is that most of those nations are providing no more than token forces. The Germans and Japanese are conspicuous by their absence, and the contributions of Britain, France, and other members of the European Community are, shall we say, rather modest. In fact, the United States is providing, at present, 70 percent of the outside—that is to say, non-Saudi—forces in the Gulf, and when our current deployments are complete, we will be providing more than 80 percent. This is awfully reminiscent of the Korean international police action, which again was an overwhelmingly U.S. operation.

Krauthammer: Of course it isn't the world against Saddam, it is us against Saddam. Saddam knows it, and all the allies who are hiding under the table know it.

But the argument against intervention on the grounds that the allies aren't carrying enough weight is an argument only for more burden sharing. It isn't an argument against intervention. If the electrical station in my neighborhood is on fire, what you are saying is that because my neighbor refuses to pitch in



“Unless the international system is actively and willfully shaped into a stable form, it adopts an anarchic and dangerous form.”

—CHARLES
KRAUTHAMMER



his fair share in putting it out, I should stay home and watch it burn down. The answer is, I go out and do everything I can to put out that fire, and I also try to encourage him to do a little bit more. We ought to get our allies to do more work, but the argument that because the allies are laggard we ought to go home and say forget it is shooting ourselves in the foot. By Ted's logic, Churchill should have called off the Battle of Britain for lack of allied burden sharing.

Pipes: I would go beyond that and say, I like it. I want the United States to be the leader. I much more trust our leadership than, let's say, Japanese leadership, German leadership. If that means paying more in money, and in lives, I think it is worth it because we will do better in the long run under the leadership of the United States.

Carpenter: I have a feeling that the American people will not react in the same way if this crisis does escalate into a conflict, and 80 or 90 percent of the allied casualties turn out to be American. I think you are going to have an extremely hostile and adverse reaction.

Pipes: We are talking about what we think should be done. We can then switch to another level, and talk about what the American people are likely to support or not support. Why do you disagree, or do you disagree, with the desirability of American decision-making latitude?

Carpenter: I want maximum freedom for the United States to make its own decisions, but that has to be based upon an assessment of our own vital interests, not carrying the load for an entire coalition, many of whose members have more at stake in this crisis than we do. Clearly Saddam poses a far greater threat to other powers in the Middle East—Egypt, Syria, and so on—than he does to the United States.

If the particular threat to our vital interests is sufficient, then, of course, we do whatever we have to do, but those situations are relatively rare where literally the survival of this country is at stake. You are dealing with a much more ambiguous situation here.

Krauthammer: OK, so we are back to your argument that it is not a vital interest. But the burden-sharing argument drops out.

Muravchik: Charles, are you saying that you support resisting Saddam Hussein because of the danger that he poses, irrespective of the principle of aggression?

Krauthammer: No. It is because of both. It seems to me that intervention has to have a high threshold, so that it cannot be just a single requirement that will trigger it. It is naive to enun-

ciate principles in advance which, if violated, would trigger American intervention—principles in the abstract like swallowing a neighbor, violating the borders, breaking the international order. One of these is a necessary condition for triggering our intervention, but it may not be sufficient. It also has to be in an area that is of interest to us, and in this particular case we have a third factor, which is an accretion of power to a dictator whose threat to us and our allies will only grow. So it is not just that he broke the rules, number one; not just that he threatens our interest and our friends, number two; but, number three, that he is going to get stronger and he will be back.

Muravchik: But is it for some reason inherently wrong to uphold the principle that opposes all aggression?

Krauthammer: Yes, we stand for certain principles. What we will expend in defense of those principles diplomatically, economically, militarily, and in human lives would be a function of a violation's importance to us and to our friends.

Muravchik: There is an interesting ethical question, it seems to me. You pointed out quite accurately that in terms of domestic law, you cannot simply enact a law and then say we are going to enforce this when it is convenient. The sense of equity and rule of law disintegrates. But in the international realm we have a different situation, so the question is, Is it inherently unethical, or hypocritical, for us to announce a principle that says the use and threat of force is wrong, and we will oppose it anywhere it happens anytime it happens, but we will oppose it by different means?

Pipes: The same thing happens domestically. Yes, the law is supposed to be equal, but when there is, say, a serial killer in Atlanta there are dozens of detectives on the case, so there are not going to be dozens of detectives available on other ones. You decide how you are going to deploy your resources, and every prosecutor makes those decisions—what is high priority and low priority. The same thing here. It is not either/or.

Krauthammer: The distinction here is between supporting or enunciating a principle and enforcing it. I would agree with you that the principle ought to be universal, but the enforcement cannot be, simply because the international system is a state of nature without a police force involved. We are sort of the self-appointed sheriff, and we don't have enough resources to enforce it all.

Frankel: Would you, Josh, urge the Saudi royal family and the sheikdoms to democratize? Do you see that as a valid and desirable goal of American foreign policy vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia?

When King Hussein opened up the political system in Jordan it was taken

over by relatively radical elements—Palestinians and fundamentalists—and the same occurred in Algeria recently. At times, to push for democracy undermines our interests.

Muravchik: I favor the democratization of those countries, of all countries, but I also think that the prospects for democracy of those Gulf states are very poor. I think that in Saudi Arabia, if the monarchy were toppled tomorrow, the odds that it would be replaced by a democratic system are very small. And the odds that it would be replaced by some new form of tyranny much more prejudicial to our interests—and probably more unhappy for the other people in the region and for Saudi Arabia itself—are very great. So I am not for toppling the Saudi regime. If a bunch of Saudi students from American universities form a democracy club, I am in favor of the National Endowment for Democracy giving them the wherewithal to publish their newsletter and to purchase copies of the *Federalist Papers*.

Postrel: Is that because it is good inherently, or is that because it is somehow in the interest of Americans?

Muravchik: I think the proliferation of self-government by people is both good for them and good for us.

Krauthammer: Daniel, do you think in the Arab countries, the culture is at a point where it would sustain democracy?

Pipes: I don't know why Saudi Arabia can't. They haven't had any experience in this, but by now they have a fairly well-educated population, a fairly sophisticated one.

On Ben's other point, about the Jordanian and Algerian elections, it is striking to see that in both those cases, and especially Jordan, the elections produced a cadre of politicians who are far more anti-Western, anti-American than current leadership. Therefore, certainly in the short run, there are problems. I would first point out that is a good thing in the abstract; and, second, that with time there may be a maturation of the political process, which diminishes the appeal of the anti-Western types. I can't promise you these developments, but they are the only hope for a more stable Middle East.

Postrel: Fairly early in the discussion, Charles, you spoke of the United States being a commercial maritime nation and, therefore, requiring some kind of interventionist policy to maintain trade. Should free trade be a goal of U.S. foreign policy?

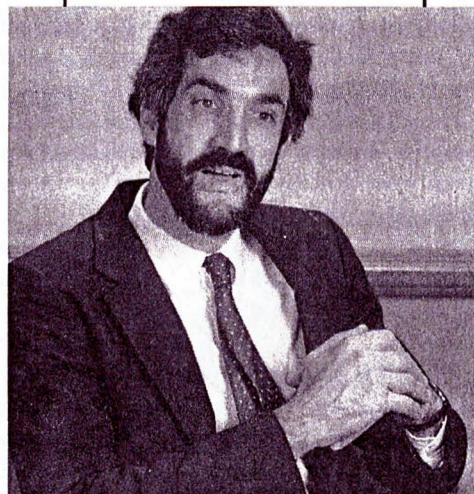
Krauthammer: Absolutely. The big story of the month was the GATT collapse, not so much the Gulf.

Carpenter: For both domestic reasons and international economic reasons we should support free trade.



“I foresee some major problems arising from massive movements of people from the less fortunate to the more fortunate parts of the world.”

—DANIEL PIPES



Domestically because if you adopt a protectionist trade regime, you do have the federal government telling American citizens with whom they may trade, what kind of products they may buy, and that intrusive policy is by its very nature obnoxious.

On the international level, a global free-trade regime promotes the maximum degree of prosperity, and I think if we embark on a course of economic nationalism, if we try to wall ourselves off from the global economy, we do, in fact, risk repeating the experiences of the 1920s and 1930s, experiences which had not just economic implications but were at least one factor in the eventual global war.

Frankel: Free trade by definition has to be played by two sides.

Krauthammer: I believe in one-sided free trade.

Frankel: If you want the United States to be in a unipolar world and continue to be the hegemonic power, we have to have certain industries, like machine tools, computers, weapons industries, steel mills, and what-have-you, which are absolutely necessary for this hegemonic position.

Pipes: I would just say that we should have free trade regardless of what the other side does, with the one possible exception of security-related areas. But that exception is open to abuse and must be watched carefully. There are cases where sugar becomes strategic, shoes—everything can be strategic. But it is an interesting principle to follow, the one that Charles alluded to, that you can gain by being a free trader even if the other side isn't. If they want to subsidize, let them subsidize. Let them muck around with their system, it doesn't mean we have to as well.

Carpenter: In addition to the problem that Dan raises, that if you make the strategic exception you have a loophole large enough to drive an 18-wheeler through, I have yet to see any evidence that a protectionist policy has benefited the health of American firms in any industry, strategic or otherwise. In fact, it has had the opposite effect historically. It allows American firms to become lax and uncompetitive. Steel perhaps being the perfect example, automobiles to a lesser but still noticeable degree.

Again, I don't see a particular threat on the horizon, with the possible exception of a cascading effect of protectionist trade measures adopted first in one major trading power, and then in another. But aside from that, I don't see a military power out there ready to sever the sea lanes. I think that is an extremely remote, improbable danger.

Frankel: The American presence out there, to the extent that it fosters a certain adherence to certain norms of interstate behavior, also fosters a more open trade environment. I think that a retreat by the United States would help create trading blocs.

Carpenter: Well, I think you are correct in a narrow sense at least—that the U.S. security guarantees to the various countries around the world gave us a certain amount of leverage to make sure that they did not adopt protectionist practices. But that is likely to be less effective in the future precisely because the value of U.S. protection—one thinks especially of the nations of Western Europe—is going to be far less.

Postrel: To what extent do commercial interests pull the

United States and other trading countries into diplomatic and military entanglements?

Krauthammer: If oil hadn't been discovered in the sands of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, I am not sure how we would have reacted to the invasion of Kuwait, but it would not have had the urgency that it did. Vital interests can often include economic interests.

To the point about chaos in trade, it is not a perfect historical example, but in the '30s, when the international system was multipolar and out of control, it was a time of catastrophic protectionism. I don't want to draw a direct line, but I think that at a time when you have international chaos, and everybody is defending his own security, it is natural to expect also a sense of everybody looking after his own economy—very short-sightedly, I might add.

The stability which we have enjoyed in our lifetimes, all of us being young enough, is not the norm. If we revert to what used to be the norm, which is kind of a state of nature out there, I don't see why this kind of economic protectionism ought not to follow in the wake of security protectionism, if you want to call it that.

Carpenter: I think it is difficult to establish a cause-and-effect relationship, though, because protectionist trade patterns emerged even during the 1920s, long before we got the breakdown of the security system globally in the 1930s. I would argue that that was probably a precipitating factor more than a consequence.

Postrel: If you have one point that you haven't made, or if you would like to summarize, please do so to conclude.

Frankel: Unlike Fukuyama and the "End of History" school, I am very worried about developments in the post-Cold War era. I believe in structures. I believe that bipolarity is good and multipolarity is bad, based on historical experience. In the absence of a menacing Soviet Union, there will not be domestic support for the kind of role that the United States should play in the world. Rather than having a relatively orderly unipolar world replacing the relatively orderly bipolar, we are going to revert to a semi-anarchic form of multipolarity in which conflicts will be exacerbated because of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and of ballistic missiles.

Krauthammer: But what has happened in the interim is Saddam. There is no doubt that in the first six months of this year there was a rush to disarm in the Congress and in the political rhetoric of the country. One of the questions at one of the president's press conferences in February was, Mr. President, why do you need \$300 billion for defense if there is no threat?

It seems to me that we would have gone down the road that Ben is describing, toward retreat, and ultimately to a kind of chaotic international system, had Saddam not intervened. Saddam is in some ways an opportunity to remind Americans that the stability that our generation has been raised on is a historical accident and an anomaly. Unless the international system is actively, consciously, and willfully shaped into a stable form, it adopts an anarchic and dangerous form.

Maybe now we will be able to make the argument that the

world is full of potential Saddams and that we are entering an age of technology where even small countries can become large threats. The acquisition of nuclear weapons and missiles is new, and it completely changes the dynamics of the international system, because it gives small powers the reach that in all of human history only the great powers had. That is new. It is an abstract idea. It is hard to explain. If we succeed in the Gulf, the argument will be easier. If we fail in the Gulf, the argument will be lost.

Muravchik: The key to molding a safe and friendly world is the upholding of two principles. One is government by consent of the governed, and a spread of democracy, and the second is resistance to aggression. I daresay, although my case doesn't rest on it, that the people of Iraq, had they the freedom to direct their government policies, might well have some very great doubts about the situation that their ruler has gotten them into right now. The caveat to my two principles is that we have to pursue them by means that are commensurate with the stakes, and by means that are best calculated to bring the desired results.

In our Gulf policy, we have relied very heavily on the U.N. and on forging a vast alliance with a lot of often not like-minded states. The difficult question is whether that is going to be a useful precedent or a paralyzing precedent. Have we taken a step toward establishing an international consensus of opposition to aggression? Or have we created a new threshold for ourselves so that when the next Saddam Hussein-type aggression occurs, if we cannot mobilize this kind of alliance, or a near-unanimous vote in the U.N. Security Council, that will be taken as an insurmountable stumbling block?

Pipes: It seems to me that the events of the last year or two have confirmed that the verdict is in on methods of government, ways of life. What I might call the era of the American party—in the sense of *party* as a good time—is upon us. It is unequivocal that we have established a way of life which is superior to the alternatives, that offers political stability, economic growth, personal freedoms, and the like. But there is a major problem inherent in this, which is that the rest of the world wants to join the American party and have fun, too. I foresee some major moral, political, and cultural problems arising from massive movements of people from the less fortunate to the more fortunate parts of the world, hammering on the doors—be they Russians wanting to work in Western Europe, or be they Mexicans wanting to work here, or Bangladeshis wanting to work no matter where.



“I don't think we ought to fritter away our advantages...to take on the thankless task of being the global policeman.”

—TED CARPENTER



Carpenter: We are witnessing, first of all, the death throes of the bipolar system that we have known since the end of World War II, and I don't see a unipolar system on the horizon. I think that is a mirage, and one that will disappear rather quickly. The international system that is going to exist in the post-Cold War period is going to bear a great deal of resemblance to the international system that existed for many, many decades prior to the advent of the U.S.-Soviet bipolar system. It may not always be a comfortable world for the United States, but we do have some important advantages—political stability, domestic freedom, great economic strength, and, yes, an advantageous geographic location.

Given the many domestic problems that we have, and the fact that the American people have borne extraordinary burdens throughout the entire Cold War period, we should seize this opportunity to define our security interests less expansively. This does not mean isolationism. We need to get away from the notion that engagement is an all-or-nothing proposition. There are various forms of engagement—diplomatic, cultural, economic, political, as well as military. In most of those categories, we ought to be involved as actively as possible in world affairs. It is only in the narrow security realm that we need to make dramatic changes. A superpower is measured by its assets, its strengths, not the extent of its burdens. I don't think that we ought to fritter away our advantages in this new post-Cold War world to take on the thankless, and ultimately exhausting, task of being the global policeman.

Postrel: Thank you very much. ■

In our June issue, REASON will run a special Letters section on post-Cold War foreign policy. We invite letters to the editor that extend the discussion, propose alternatives, or take issue with viewpoints expressed in this roundtable.