AMERICAN POWER AND AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

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I want to speak about the relationship between power and diplomacy—particularly American power and American diplomacy—in a dramatically changed and changing world.

This is an extraordinary moment in world affairs. The single, overarching threat of the Cold War has vanished. The international environment is starkly new—a far cry from the old strategic landscape, in which every move and every alteration was interpreted in relation to the Soviet threat.

But even in this new era there are some old truths.

The first is that the divisions and debates about our role in the world are as old as our Republic. On one side stand severely limited forms of foreign engagement and protectionism; on the other, active American engagement abroad on behalf of democracy and on behalf of expanded trade.

After World War II, thanks in large part to the threat posed by the Soviet Union, that debate was resolved in favor of active engagement. Today, as in the late 1940s, we face again the old impulse to retrench. And today, as in the late 1940s, our interests demand that we check that impulse. But our task is much more difficult now, because we undertake it in circumstances not of the late 1940s but of the 1920s: much of our society now as in the 1920s seeks a rest from the rigors of international activism and there is no single threat against which to rally public opinion.

A second old truth is this: ideas matter. They are at stake in most of the daily struggles we see around the world. As President Clinton has said, "We face a contest as old as history—a struggle between freedom and tyranny; between tolerance and isolation. It is a fight between those who would build free societies governed by laws and those who would impose their will by force. Our struggle today, in a world more high-tech, more fast-moving, more chaotically diverse than ever, is the age-old fight between hope and fear."

This brings me to the third old truth in this new era: power still matters. We are not the world's policeman. But in this struggle between hope and fear, our power will make the critical difference, as it did in two world wars and the Cold War. And at the heart of American power lies the threat or use of military force.

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Without it, Haiti would not today be at the dawn of a difficult but exciting democratic opportunity. And without it, Iraq would today be threatening its neighbors with a dangerous military deployment on the borders of Kuwait. In short, diplomacy disconnected from power usually fails. At the same time, power without diplomacy is dangerously lacking in purpose.

This, I know, is not a novel thought. In antiquity, Thucydides set out with graphic horror in the Melian dialogue the weakness of diplomacy without the backing of force. The sound arguments of the Melians for preserving their independence provided no defense against an Athens bent on subjugation. Without the power to back their positions, Melos's men were put to the sword; women and children were sold as slaves.

The same arguments many centuries later in Europe in the late 1930s were resolved by Hitler and his policy by panzer, and in the Pacific by Pearl Harbor. Following World War II, far-sighted statesmen like Dean Acheson worked to keep that lesson in the American mind. Acheson and other wise men knew that the United States needed all the instruments of diplomacy and power to defend vital interests and prevail over the long haul in the Cold War. It was Acheson who coined the phrase, "negotiate from a position of strength."

Today, of course, American diplomacy draws considerable strength from its economic power and the power of our example. It is not only that our global economic reach makes the American voice an important one on almost every global issue that we can think of. The new global economy may also be causing a small revolution in the nature of diplomacy. As the economy of every nation depends increasingly on participation in the single marketplace, most economies become more vulnerable also to the effects of economic isolation.

This means that they may be more susceptible to both economic inducement and economic penalties. South Africa presents a wonderful example of this. And we have seen just how effective both incentives and sanctions can be in our negotiations with North Korea over their nuclear weapons program. We welcome, of course, all the North Korean decisions that led to the agreement which we have signed.[1] I think it is a hell of a deal. The agreement is in their interest, as well as ours, for it can help end their economic and political isolation. But it may not have been accidental that real progress in the talks occurred last summer when it became clear we were about to take a sanctions resolution to the United Nations Security Council.

We also see the power of sanctions in the case and behavior of Serbia. Indeed, you can draw a direct line from the dramatic effects of the isolation of the Serbian economy to the evolving policy of Slobodan Milosevic.

But the very heart of America's power is *military force*. This is why President Clinton has vowed that our armed forces will remain the best trained, the best equipped and the best prepared military in the world. I say "remain" the best, because the efficient and rapid way in which our military conducted their recent

[1] The 21 October 1994 agreement calls for a U.S.-led consortium to provide two light-water reactors to North Korea in exchange for the halt of its nuclear program.

operations in the Gulf and Haiti can leave no doubt about their current readiness and strength.

The Cassandras attacking our readiness are simply wrong: we have pre-positioned arms in hot spots like the Persian Gulf, expanded our sea- and airlift capabilities, and increased funding for operations and maintenance in fiscal 1995 by over five percent. There are indeed readiness and mobility concerns for the future that we must and will address, but our troops rapid and effective successive deployments to Haiti and Iraq confirmed our confidence: we remain prepared to fight and win two major regional conflicts almost simultaneously.

Our challenge is not only a matter of maintaining our military might. We also need a new national debate today on the critical questions of when, where and how to use military force. In the late 1940s and 1950s, there was just such a wide-ranging discussion on questions of nuclear doctrine and limited war. I believe we desperately need a similar exchange today, and you in this room have a central role to play in shaping the debate and thereby shaping our common future.

When will we use force? The short answer remains what it always has, or should have, been—when our interests require us to do so. What are these American interests?

During the Cold War, our interests were defined overwhelmingly in terms of the threat to the United States posed by Soviet nuclear weapons. That led to the policy of nuclear deterrence. Thanks in part to that policy, we are free and alive and assembled here today.

The policy of containment also flowed from America's definition of interest in the light of the Soviet threat. The national consensus behind containment helped produce victory in the Cold War. But, as Vietnam showed, the relationship between means and ends in fighting limited wars was never satisfactorily defined.

Today, with an ever increasing choice of possible missions in a rapidly changing world, our thinking needs still finer resolution than it has ever had before.

Just as in the promotion of democracy and open markets we concentrate on those areas where our interests are most deeply engaged, so we must be as clear as possible on when and where we will use military force. For there is no more important decision a President makes.

No matter how clear our military doctrine, that decision has and should always come down to a judgment that weighs the importance of a particular mission, defined in terms of our interest, against its presumed costs.

Here, in general if not perfect order of priority, are the seven national interests, taken in some combination or even alone, that the Clinton Administration believes can merit the use of our military, especially in areas of greatest strategic significance:

- To defend against direct attacks on the United States, its citizens at home and abroad, and its allies;
- To counter aggression, which is central to preserving a peaceful world;

- To defend our most important economic interests, because it is here that Americans see their most immediate personal stake in our international engagement;
- To preserve, promote and defend democracy, which in turn enhances our security and the spread of our values;
- To prevent the dangerous proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; to prevent acts of terrorism and to combat the deadly flow of drugs;
- To maintain our reliability. When the U.S. makes commitments to other nations, we must keep our promises; and
- For humanitarian purposes, such as combating famine and other natural disasters and in cases of overwhelming violations of human rights.

An array of interests need not mean disarray in setting our priorities. By itself, none of the interests in this general hierarchy—with the certain exception of attacks on our nation and its allies and the possible exception of aggression elsewhere—should automatically lead to the use of force. But the wider the range of these interests at stake, the more likely that we will call again on our military. That is why, in Haiti, when we saw democracy denied, our borders threatened, our reliability on the line and a reign of brutality so close to our own shores, we saw a compelling case for intervention.

It is not our interests alone that decide when and where to use force. Against the interests at stake we must measure the costs and benefits of each specific operation, and answer such questions as: Is there a clearly defined, achievable mission? What is the environment of risk we are entering? What are the prospects for success? What is needed to achieve our goals? What are the potential costs—both human and financial—of the engagement? Do we have a realistic exit strategy?

There is no algorithm here—no simple formula that asks us only to fill in the numbers in calculating the risks and the requirements of each mission. But we do know that those are the factors we must consider as we decide when and where to send our young men and women into danger.

There is also a set of guidelines that help shape *how* we use force, and its likely utility when we do.

When we send American troops abroad, we will send them with a clear mission and the means to prevail. And when we use force, we must be prepared to use it unflinchingly. To do otherwise endangers the interests we seek to safeguard, as well as the troops we send.

We should never delude ourselves: Deploying our military often will not solve underlying problems, and we must carefully limit the missions we choose. Force can defeat an aggressor, but it will not conjure democracy into existence or flip the switch on to prosperity. It may only begin to make a solution possible farther down the road. When we do act, we will do so with others when we can, but alone when we must. In some cases, in which we should not act unilaterally, we may choose to join in multilateral action as we share the burdens and spread the risks. The United States has consistently led the effort to build coalitions to

meet the needs of the international community. Joining together in common cause makes us all stronger, and deepens our moral authority.

The more deeply our interests are threatened, of course, the more inclined we are to act alone. That is why we have said that we will act by ourselves in the Persian Gulf, if necessary—and did so earlier when the Iraqis plotted against the life of a former American President and thus against our whole people, as well.

Finally, a cautionary note on what has been another potential guideline. Some have argued for a simpler policy: that we should assert a sphere of influence in our own hemisphere and in limited areas beyond, leaving to others the task of maintaining stability and order in their own spheres.

This view, I believe, is dangerously wrong.

Certainly, proximity counts. Had Haiti not been so close to our shores, we would have been less likely to act in Haiti. The dramatic advance of democracy in this hemisphere is one of the truly stirring developments of our time, and we have an obvious interest in preventing any unraveling of that achievement.

We recognize that all nations have greater concerns for their immediate surroundings than they do for distant regions. But as a great nation, whose interests and ideals are global in scope, we cannot—and will not—cede to others a right to intervene as they wish in the affairs of their neighbors without regard to international norms of behavior. Specifically, we must expect of others that they will respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their neighbors, just as we do.

These, then, are the calculations of interest and cost that have produced our past use of military power and will guide us in the future.

Every time we have used force, we have balanced interests against costs. And in each case, our use of our military has put power behind our diplomacy, allowing us to make progress we would not otherwise have achieved.

Iraq poses a threat of aggression in which a broad range of American interests are engaged. So we are leading a coalition under the authority of the United Nations—but are prepared to act alone if we must. The result of the President's decisive action has been not only the near-resolution of the current crisis, but a new injunction by the Security Council against future Iraqi aggression.

In Haiti, where lesser but nonetheless important interests are at stake, we also acted—but at a potentially lower cost. Over three years, we had exhausted all avenues of negotiation and the use of economic sanctions in our efforts to redeem the pledges of two administrations to restore the democratically elected government there. But in the end it was only the use of force that could finally bring success. When the Haitian generals received the news that the 82nd Airborne was, in fact, airborne and headed their way—*they* gave way. As a result, we achieved peacefully what we were prepared to do under fire. I recall that Sunday afternoon vividly when it looked like we might have to use force. If you are prepared to use force you may "subdue the enemy without fighting," to use Sun Tzu's words. The ancient strategist called that "the acme of skill."

In Bosnia, we have not seen all the progress that we would like, but when

diplomacy has been married to military power, positive movement has been the result. For example, the Sarajevo ultimatum[2] succeeded primarily because the threat of NATO air strikes was concrete. NATO's decision on the use of air power substantially eased the pressures on Sarajevo, prevented the fall of Gorazde, and provided the foundation for last spring's agreement between the Bosnians and Bosnian Croats to end their conflict and form a federation. The recent NATO decision to seek greater clarity and flexibility from the United Nations in Bosnia is a step in the right direction.

In Rwanda and Somalia, our missions were primarily humanitarian, our interests more narrow. Only the American military could have done what it did, saving hundreds and hundreds of thousands of lives and we are very proud of that. But over the longer run, our interests did not justify more than support for multilateral peacekeeping efforts once our own missions were concluded. And there, as elsewhere, international peacekeeping efforts can only give a fractured society a window of opportunity—a time of relative security—in which to heal its own wounds. No outside force can impose on any society what is, in the end, its own responsibility.

A final point: Policy, of course, does not succeed or fail in a vacuum. Public opinion and the Congress rightfully play central roles in how the United States wields its power abroad. Perhaps the outstanding lesson we learned during Vietnam was the importance of what Leslie Gelb once called "the essential domino": public opinion. That conflict taught us to think more carefully about costs, more carefully about willpower as well as firepower, and more carefully about the length of engagement. But above all, it taught us that the United States cannot long sustain a fight without the support of public opinion.

Public opinion is formed in our era in even more perplexing ways than during the Vietnam years. This is especially true for humanitarian and other non-traditional interventions. The quantum leap in coverage brought about by CNN and the other networks means that almost every day, every American must be beset by painful ambivalence.

Images of violence, misery and brutality naturally call up the impulse to intervene. The television screen transforms a particular incident into an apparently universal condition in that foreign society. The camera, unfortunately, does not have peripheral vision. My country, and perhaps my country alone, the viewer feels, can do something about this carnage and must do something about this carnage.

But when images of casualties—our casualties—appear, everything can change instantly. The costs become painfully obvious, and the questions arises: Can this possibly be worth even one American life?

Neither of these sentiments should surprise or dismay us. Both reactions are expressions of the high value Americans place on human life. And we are a better people for it.

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[2] The February 1994 NATO Sarajevo Ultimatum, by using the threat of NATO air power, established a heavy weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo virtually ending Bosnian Serb heavy artillery shelling of Sarajevo.

But while as individuals we all may share this painful ambivalence, it is the responsibility of government to make real choices and to *act* — distinguishing between the essential and the tangential, acting on the basis of what is right, and then, when action is taken, doing so without hesitation or vacillation.

To do this, there must be better understanding and cooperation between the Executive and the Congress. We both, of course, must ultimately be responsible to the public for our decisions. And this means a necessary and proper caution about incurring the costs of military action. It is, after all, the American people who bear the burdens and pay the price.

But we also know, from our most recent experience in the Persian Gulf, that the American people are not so averse to the use of force as some might think, especially if classic interests like security in Europe or Asia or the Middle East are in question. And as a new Rand study indicates, they want to see our troops succeed once they are committed.

Congress, we have seen, also supports the use of force whenever the nation's classic interests are at stake. That is a great advantage, since it is imperative that the executive branch and Congress work together on these issues.

But in the post-Cold War world, we must also have the capacity for the limited use of force in new circumstances. And too often in such cases, some in Congress react by emphasizing only the cautionary notes, seeing only costs and casualties rather than benefits and opportunities.

And, when we use force—to repeat—we must use it unflinchingly. Otherwise we risk our objectives and we endanger our troops, both in the specific mission at hand and around the world. When Congress almost automatically considers resolutions calling for an early withdrawal of our forces when deployed in non-traditional settings, it undermines our objectives and it compounds the risk for our troops. It is virtually an invitation for the thug of the month to see if he can force our departure from some difficult corner of the world by attacking our soldiers there. For this reason, among others, President Clinton opposed a hasty withdrawal from Somalia last fall. That would have been the wrong way out and sent the wrong message around the world. Instead, he raised our troop level before successfully drawing it down, over time, on schedule and without further casualties.

This issue transcends the daily work we do in dealing with the Congress. And recognizing Congress' role, the Clinton Administration has consulted with it in unprecedented ways—seventy-five times alone in the case of Haiti.

But what is needed is a war powers mechanism and system of consultations that work. Next year, we will hold serious discussions with Congress on amending the War Powers Resolution in an effort to ameliorate a struggle between these branches of government that has lasted two centuries. It will never be resolved, and perhaps never should be. But the terms and tone of the competition over the making of national security policy must be improved, and must lose some of its current partisan cast, or our nation and troops could pay an unnecessary price for it.

Americans know that the passing of the Cold War, reassuring as that is, does not mean we live in a world of true safety. We also know that we have before us

an opportunity to build a world of more democracy, more tolerance and more pluralism. It is the kind of opportunity that comes, at most, once in an era. To defeat the dangers and seize the day, we must summon our creativity and all of our diplomatic skill. And to that skill, we must always harness our power. So let us keep fixed in our minds the precept of one of the Enlightenment's great realists, Frederick the Great, who said: "Diplomacy without arms is music without instruments."

And let us remain alert to the danger of slippage and retreat. We must reject the calls from the left and the right, as well as the rhetoric of Neo-Know-Nothings of no particular view, to stay at home rather than engage.

You in this room may not believe that we are fighting a new round of the old struggle between engagement and retrenchment. The debate is less clearly defined than it was in the period between the two world wars. But every time a foreign aid bill is slashed, a troop deployment opposed on ideological rather than practical grounds, or a good trade agreement is attacked, it is part and parcel of that same traditional argument. The impulse to retreat from the world, like the fog, comes in on little cat feet. So I ask you to join in efforts to keep our nation from becoming befogged in the face of a new world of continuing danger. For it is also a time of immense and wonderful opportunity. I think we will seize it.