

years' imprisonment in a labor camp in the Urals. As a result, his important testimony was never presented as evidence in court.

With the arrest of Trepashkin, the investigation of the apartment bombings faltered. Those in Russia who wanted to raise the issue lacked investigative tools such as subpoena power and were well aware that too active an interest could cost them their lives. The rest of the world was complacent, unwilling to consider the implications of a terrorist's being in charge of the world's largest nuclear arsenal.

IN May 2003, *Darkness at Dawn* was published. A month later, I presented the book in Washington at the Hudson Institute, where I am a senior fellow. A German film crew arrived with Aliona Morozova. I explained why I believed that the apartment bombings were a provocation. My remarks provided the central narrative of a film titled "Disbelief," which premiered in 2004 at the Sundance Film Festival. A Russian-language version of *Disbelief* was put on YouTube and circulated widely in Russia.

But, unfortunately, real action required civic leaders—and persons capable of helping to make the bombings a serious political issue were disappearing one by one. Anna Politkovskaya, Russia's leading investigative journalist, and Alexander Litvinenko continued to speak out on the case. Politkovskaya was shot dead in the elevator of her apartment block on October 7, 2006; Litvinenko died on November 23 from radioactive polonium-210 that had been put in his tea in a London sushi restaurant.

When I moved to Russia to work as an adviser and contributor to Radio Liberty in September 2003, I had no immediate plans to deal with the apartment bombings. But I knew the subject would arise eventually. I believe that the Russian authorities were aware of this, too. In fact, the apartment bombings are impossible for a conscientious observer to ignore. The circumstantial evidence that the bombings were carried out by the FSB is overwhelming. The only reason there is no direct evidence is that the Putin regime has concealed it. In the case of the Ryazan incident, the authorities have sequestered the persons who put the bomb in the basement, the records of the exercise, and the dummy bomb itself. They putatively did this to protect state secrets, but, according to Russian law, among the things that cannot be considered state secrets are facts about "catastrophes threatening the security and health of the citizens" and "violations of the law by state organs and officials."

The greatest barrier to accepting the evidence that points to the FSB as the perpetrator of the bombings is sheer reluctance to believe that such a thing could be possible. By any standard, murdering hundreds of innocent and randomly chosen fellow citizens in order to hold on to power is an example of cynicism that cannot be comprehended in a normal human context. But it is fully consistent with the Communist inheritance of Russia and with the kind of country that Russia has become.

Russia never really forgot the apartment bombings. During the anti-Putin protests in 2011 and 2012, demonstrators carried signs referring to the attacks. It is common in Russia for people to avoid certain issues because otherwise "it will be impossible to live." Unfortunately, an issue doesn't disappear simply because it is ignored. Of all the dangers that hang over Russia, none is more menacing than the failure to demand answers to the 17-year-old mystery of how Putin came to power. **NR**

The World We Have; the World We Want

A case for disciplined activism in foreign affairs

BY HENRY R. NAU

AMERICA is walking away from the world "as it wished it to be" in 1945, a world of unprecedented peace, democracy, and prosperity. And it is embracing a world "as it is" in 2016 that is rapidly descending into violence, nationalism, and recession.

In 1945, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman could only dream of the world that exists today. They lived in a brutal and chaotic era that had descended twice in 25 years into the depravity of horrific war. They did not accept the state of affairs as it was. They helped create a better world, one that for 70 years avoided another major global war, vanquished the scourge of totalitarianism championed by the former Soviet Union, spread freedom for the first time throughout the whole of Europe and significant parts of Asia, and created a global economy that produced rapid growth and reduced inequality as defeated and developing nations steadily closed the gap in relative wealth and power with the United States.

Now, America's leaders, including both major-party presidential candidates, dismiss the idea that we can make the world as we wish it to be. That's utopian ideology, they say, a foreign policy that leads to military quagmires and diverts us from our hard-core national interests. Obama ridiculed his predecessor for muscling freedom forward in Iraq and Afghanistan and spurned new military interventions in Ukraine and Syria. Hillary Clinton, his first secretary of state and the Democratic nominee for president, intervened in Libya but now regrets it; she has also walked back her commitments to major trade agreements. And Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, threatens to undo the pillars of the Truman/Reagan world: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the World Trade Organization. They all claim they will defend the core (which for Trump is little more than America's shores) and avoid the periphery (which for Obama and Clinton appears to include Ukraine and the disputed islands in the South and East China Seas). Stop trying to make the world as you wish it to be, they say, and take care of America first, in the world as it is.

The siren song is tempting. But the world doesn't get better just because we accept it as it is. It depends on what other leaders want. And other leaders are making the world the way they wish it to be. At the core, the Truman/Reagan world might be unraveling. Britain exits the European Union; Poland, Hungary, and potentially other new democracies in Europe drift toward an authoritarian

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Russia; and South Korea is politically at odds with Japan and economically dependent on a more nationalist China. And at the periphery, dangers threaten to invade the core. Russia, China, and ISIS do not accept the world as it is. Vladimir Putin seeks a new Europe, in which Russia exercises a veto power in the former Soviet republics (including, if he can get away with it, the Baltic states). He is creating problems in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria to keep the West's influence at bay. Xi Jinping resists the spread of Western liberal ideology in Asia, especially in Taiwan and on the Korean Peninsula, and stokes Chinese nationalism and military aggression to keep the West off-balance. And the Islamic State wages a real war alongside its propaganda campaign to mobilize fanatical forces against Western infidels both near and far.

Earlier American leaders understood that visions of the world as we wish it to be shape the world as it is today. When President Truman decided in 1948 to keep American forces in West Berlin, he defined the Cold War conflict as an ideological confrontation between two ways of life, freedom and oppression, not as another episode in which to balance power or protect territory. Soviet actions in Berlin did not threaten American territory or even European borders (Berlin was inside the Soviet zone of Germany). And when Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union an evil empire, he rallied the free world to send Communism to the ash heap of history, not to coexist with it indefinitely.

The world today contains fewer risks than it did in 1945 precisely because Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan refused to settle for the world as it was. Imagine if there were no more democracies today than in 1914. America would be completely surrounded by authoritarian regimes in Europe and Asia, as it was in the 1930s. Or imagine that the Soviet Union had won the Cold War or the Cold War had ended in compromise, with Europe half-free and half-slave. Communism would still exist in much of Europe and Asia, and Soviet-style markets would cripple globalization and growth. The information age would never have begun. Thankfully, none of this happened, because visionary leaders understood that history is not predestined but an ongoing ideological struggle between freedom and oppression.

LEADERS who accept the world as it is propagate a benign view of history. They talk about a world without struggle, in which history is on our side and ideological differences are irrelevant. President Obama repeatedly favored cooperation with the countries whose ideological differences were most threatening (China, Iran, Cuba) because he believed that the tide of history (modernization, globalization, pluralism) would move them inexorably in our direction.

This benign view of history ignores the grave risks the United States accepted to make the world a better place. It assumes that the liberal order that exists globally today always existed, even before the Cold War. The tide of history simply swept along, leaving most advanced countries in a relatively peaceful state.

In an issue of *Foreign Affairs* last fall, Gideon Rose, the editor of that journal, and his colleagues argue that the liberal order existed before World War II and had little to do with the hard-fought ideological battles against Fascism and Communism. "So instead of saying that the Cold War caused or defined the order," Rose writes, "it is more accurate to say that the Soviet Union's unwillingness to take part in the order caused the Cold War." According to Rose and company, countries are predestined to join

the liberal order; and if they do not, they will be defeated not by a coalition of liberal powers but by the impersonal forces of history. The liberal order in short is composed of "democracies with mixed economies . . . nestling closely under an American security umbrella" that thrive and expand at the core as long as the United States avoids quagmires on the periphery and lets history take its course.

The idea that today's liberal order emerged before the Cold War, had little to do with the Cold War, and progressed as long as the United States avoided quagmires on the periphery is bizarre, to say the least. The core, certainly as we know it today, did not exist in 1941. It had to be created and expanded, not just defended. And it had to be *made* liberal. The West was never open, as the *Foreign Affairs* account suggests, to "any country that wants to join, . . . [regardless] of geography, race, religion, or other ascriptive characteristics." It was open to countries that were already liberal or, if not, then opposed to Communism and more comfortable aligning with liberal than with Communist countries.

Think about it: If the core existed before the Cold War, it must have been composed of the victorious alliance that vanquished Fascist Germany and Japan. That alliance included the Soviet Union, which is why Rose and his colleagues imagine it was part of the core until Moscow rashly bolted and started the Cold War. But that core, with the Soviet Union included, also formed the United Nations, and the United Nations was not a liberal but a universal order that brought together all countries, liberal or not. And the United Nations failed spectacularly to deal with the post-war world, either to defend or to expand a liberal world order.

If, on the other hand, the core excluded the Soviet Union, it must have been the Atlantic Charter, the U.S.-British statement forged in August 1941 that affirmed liberal principles on behalf of the relatively few democracies that existed at the time. So what was the periphery where, in this benign view of the world, we should avoid drawn-out conflicts? Was it Germany and continental Europe, where democracies were either weak, as in France and Italy, or nonexistent, as in Germany, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey? Did President Truman get sucked into a quagmire on the periphery when he refused to abandon Berlin in 1948, against the advice of all his principal advisers, or when he rallied U.N. forces to checkmate Soviet-sponsored aggression in Korea in 1950? Were the subsequent American alliance with Japan and Truman's support for the creation of Israel (again against the advice of his principal advisers) further commitments on the periphery that sucked the United States into quagmires?

There is no hint of any of these struggles in the benign view of history, no hint that the liberal order had to be envisioned, defended at great risk ("nestling" is hardly the right word to describe nuclear deterrence and, say, the Cuban Missile Crisis), expanded through steady economic development, and, yes, made liberal by promoting freedom in Europe and Asia. The benign view of history credits pragmatists such as George Kennan, Truman's adviser, and Brent Scowcroft, Nixon's and George H. W. Bush's adviser, with ending the Cold War. In truth, they had little to do with that outcome. In the 1940s and 1970s, they advocated coexistence and the status quo. They had no plan to defeat Communism.

Presidents Truman and Reagan did. Truman summoned the Marshall Plan and NATO to incubate a partial and struggling liberal core in Europe and thwarted Soviet-inspired military aggression in Korea, even though George Kennan opposed this extension of the Cold War to the Asian "periphery." Reagan

then revitalized this core in both Europe and Asia by branding the Soviet Union an “evil empire” and challenging it to an arms race it could not win (the stick) and a global economic boom it dared not miss (the carrot). At the time, pragmatists howled that Reagan was an ideologue who wanted to start a third world war.

Truman and Reagan took risks to defeat Communism. Truman, after all, was accused of starting the Cold War. And he may well have. Once he understood that the rapid demobilization of Western forces in Europe (while Soviet forces remained in Eastern Europe) and the creaky domestic foundations of Western European countries (where Communist parties participated in coalition governments) invited Soviet intimidation if not attack, he opted to re-arm and risk a “cold” war in order to avoid a “hot” war. Thanks to that decision, free markets and democracy stabilized and spread throughout the Western alliance. Truman failed to do the same in Asia, and the Soviet Union probed for advantage by proxy war in Korea. Imagine if that probe had occurred in Europe because Truman had declared Berlin to be “peripheral” to Western interests.

Similarly, Reagan was accused of starting the “New Cold War.” He armed America to the teeth, deployed nuclear missiles in Europe, and revived the American and world economy. He then used this military and economic leverage not to guarantee coexistence but to secure agreements that unraveled the Soviet Union. There would have been no end of the Cold War if the United States had remained stuck in the post-Vietnam malaise and economic stagflation that Reagan inherited.

Yes, Gorbachev came along—not because of the “tide of history” but because the Reagan renaissance required more-dynamic leadership in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev and other Soviet officials acknowledged the role that America’s rebound and especially its military buildup played in Soviet calculations. Addressing the Politburo in October 1986, a year and a half after becoming the general secretary of the party, Gorbachev warned his colleagues: “We will be pulled into another round of the arms race that is beyond our capabilities, and we will lose it.” General Sergei Akhromeyev, chief of the Soviet general staff at the time and a hardline critic of Gorbachev’s “New Thinking,” later confirmed Gorbachev’s warning: “The Soviet Union could no longer continue a policy of military confrontation with the U.S. and NATO after 1985.” (Akhromeyev was eventually involved in the coup to overthrow Gorbachev, and he committed suicide after the coup failed.) Here was the payoff of the Reagan military buildup. Critics who celebrate Reagan’s reluctance to use force in peripheral places such as Lebanon completely miss his larger use of military power (the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces, the Strategic Defense Initiative, freedom fighters) to subdue the Soviet Union.

HISTORICAL amnesia also distorts the role that economic muscle played in defining and winning the Cold War. True, after World War II, the Western economies were mixed, in contrast to the statist, monopolistic economies of Communist countries. But the early Bretton Woods system did not move the Western economies in the direction of statism or what the liberal academic community heralds as “embedded lib-



eralism” (a presumed trade-off that sanctioned economic intervention to protect workers in return for the removal of trade barriers). It moved them in the opposite direction, toward free-market policies. Industries that nationalized during the war were privatized, and fiscal and monetary authorities in the United States, Britain, West Germany, and other European countries adopted conservative economic policies rather than interventionist ones, encouraging flexible labor markets that accommodated freer trade. Had governments intervened to protect labor, as presumed by the theory of embedded liberalism, there would have been no post-war trade and economic boom.

In fact, the post-war boom nose-dived the minute domestic policies became more statist and interventionist. In the 1970s, Great Society programs, inflationary monetary and fiscal policies, and massive price increases in oil strangled market incentives. American and free-world economies stagnated, performing not much better than the Soviet economy.

Had these conditions persisted, it is unlikely that the Soviet Union would have experienced catastrophic economic pressure. It would have limped along as the West did. And, because of “limits to growth” occasioned by oil and resource shortages (predicted by a computer model at the time), there would have been no investment, no innovation, and therefore no information revolution.

How did this situation change? Did the world just limp along until Bill Clinton arrived? Hillary Clinton says, “The economy does better when you have a Democrat in the White House.” But this assessment is preposterous. Bill Clinton inherited a Reagan economy that boomed from 1983 to 1989 at an average annual real rate of 4.5 percent, dipped but still grew during the mild

recession years of 1990 and 1991, and then expanded again at 4.4 percent in 1992. That was the year in which Clinton, with the help of Ross Perot, won the White House with 43 percent of the vote on the slogan “It’s the economy, Stupid.” Maybe “it’s the media, Stupid,” that missed this colossal distortion of economic reality.

The heavy lifting to reverse the economic paralysis of the 1970s was done by Ronald Reagan. Reagan put in place the tax-cutting, deregulatory policies and free-trade initiatives that created 50 million new jobs in the 1980s and 1990s and propelled global markets into the information age, eventually drawing in the emerging and former Communist nations. And he did so at considerable risk. Reagan’s economic program defied conventional wisdom and tested the alliance. But it worked spectacularly. Even *Time* magazine declared: “Ronald Reagan can now boast of having engineered one of the most stunning economic turnarounds in U.S. history.”

So where does this leave us today? It leaves us with two ways forward. The first is a passive approach that accepts the world as it is, stays out of the Middle East and other supposedly peripheral areas, and trusts that other leaders and the tide of history will sustain the liberal order. Alternatively, we can actively lead a world in which authoritarian and liberal ways of life continue to compete, we advance liberty incrementally where it counts the most, and economic growth is revived to dispel protectionist and populist anxieties.

Both approaches entail risks: The passive approach would risk falling down a precipitous slope as it descends into wider war later, as other leaders shaped the agenda and violence escalated (e.g., Russia in Syria). The activist approach would risk descending a slippery slope into wider war earlier, as American leaders overreached (as the U.S. did in Iraq). But only the activist approach can make the world as we wish it to be.

Rather than jettison the activist approach, we should discipline it. Don’t pursue democracy in every country at once. Focus on the countries that matter the most: today, Ukraine and Turkey, which lie on the border between Russia and free Europe, and South Korea and Taiwan, which lie between China and free Asia (principally Japan). Losing freedom in these countries would endanger the core, and spreading freedom would cost less because strong alliances and vibrant markets exist just across the border. In the Middle East and South Asia, defeat radical Islam, but don’t try to spread democracy.

Similarly, create jobs to dispel anxieties over trade and immigration. Don’t redistribute jobs by protectionism. Altogether, some 12 million jobs in the United States, or 8.5 percent of the work force, have been created by either direct or indirect foreign investment. If we take American jobs back from overseas, other countries will take their jobs back from the United States. Much better would be a stimulus program that did not raise the national debt by even one dollar. Create incentives for American industries to invest the \$3 trillion they carry on their balance sheets because they have no confidence in the recovery under Obama, the slowest in post-war history.

Truman and Reagan knew what they wanted, and the world became a better place. Today the world is getting less democratic and prosperous, and the risks of war are rising. Leave it or lead it? As Reagan’s turnaround from the 1970s illustrates, the future is a place we choose, not a necessity that history dictates. **NR**

A Sufficient Defense

We must arrest and reverse our military’s gradual decline

BY DAVID ADESNIK

IF the Department of Defense can’t figure out a way to defend the United States on a budget of more than half a trillion dollars a year,” said then-secretary of defense Robert M. Gates in 2009, “then our problems are much bigger than anything that can be cured by buying a few more ships and planes.” Gates’s pointed remark reflects a concern broadly shared by small-government conservatives as well as many liberals. For the past 25 years, there has been no army, navy, or air force in the world that comes close to matching its American counterpart in terms of either its prowess on the battlefield or the size of its budget. In fact, the U.S. spent more on defense last year than the next seven top spenders combined. Many are clamoring for a slimmer, cheaper military. But *can* we defend the country for less? With a national debt of \$19 trillion, how should American policymakers be thinking about defense spending?

Significantly, Gates himself soon discarded the notion that \$500 billion per year represents the upper bound for a fiscally responsible defense budget. Instead, he decided, spending levels should correspond to the intensity of the threats we face and our strategy for defeating them. Yet Gates reversed himself only after an aggressive campaign to promote efficiency. In 2009–10, he canceled \$300 billion of planned purchases and cut another \$178 billion from projected spending. Yet in his final budget proposal, submitted in February 2011, Gates asked for \$553 billion for fiscal year 2012, rising to \$611 billion for 2016 (both figures are in current dollars and exclude supplemental appropriations for the war in Afghanistan). He warned the country “not [to] repeat the mistakes of the past by making drastic and ill-conceived cuts to the overall defense budget” while so many threats remained.

Regardless, Congress passed and the president signed the Budget Control Act of 2011—the infamous “sequestration” bill—which ushered in five years of deprivation for the Department of Defense. This year, the Pentagon has a budget of \$522 billion, or \$89 billion less than what Gates projected (again excluding war-related costs, which have plummeted with the withdrawal of all but 9,800 troops from Afghanistan). The result is a force that, by the admission of its own leaders, is barely able to execute the missions required by the president’s strategy.

When a new president and new Congress take office next January, their first priority should be to restore the defense budget to the level Gates requested, and they should maintain at least that level of investment for a minimum of a decade, or until the world becomes a substantially safer place. After all, when Secretary Gates submitted his final proposal, the Islamic State existed mainly on paper, Iran

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