
Reflecting their traditional preoccupations with Europe, most American political elites accept as obvious that "the Cold War is over." What they really mean is that in Europe, the Cold War seemed to end with the breaching of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. They tend to ignore or be ignorant of the simultaneous Cold Wars in East Asia and Latin America, which had different ideological and material foundations and which continued unabated after the demise of the communist camp.

In East Asia, the confrontation with China has long preoccupied American strategists above all others, but they have been forced to guard what they say and take an indirect approach because of China's growing economic power and because any conflict with China would seriously overstretch American military and financial capabilities. Ironically enough, China has been proceeding in ways the United States once hoped it would, effectively dismantling Leninism without the political instability of the former Soviet Union and becoming one of the most capitalist (and fastest growing) economies on earth. By so doing, however, it is rapidly approaching superpower status and possibly threatening American dominance over East Asia.

On the Korean peninsula, the artificial division imposed in 1945 by the United States and the Soviet Union persists, although relations between the two Korean entities themselves have improved. In June 2000, the leaders of North and South Korea met in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and started a process looking toward the reunification of the country without interference from any outside power. The meeting allowed President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea to proclaim, "The North will no longer attempt unification by force and, at the same time, we will not do any harm to the North. The most important outcome of the summit is that there is no longer going to be any war." Unfortunately, this statement may no longer be true. President Kim won the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize for this breakthrough, but he did not fully calculate how threatening his initiative was to the interests of American militarism and the military-industrial complex. President George W. Bush's "axis of evil" speech of January 29, 2002—singling out Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the next targets for American preemptive attack—did much to undermine the emerging hopes for peace on the Korean peninsula. By mid-2003, relations between North Korea and the United States, with South Korea as an increasingly alarmed and anti-American bystander, had become perhaps the most threatening on earth, including the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Similarly, the Cold War in Latin America is not only not over but, in July 2000, entered a new, more virulent stage in Colombia and other Andean nations with the escalation of United States military intervention under cover of fighting the drug war. Following directly on the U.S.'s Vietnam-like operations in Central America throughout the 1980s, this new phase in South America includes clandestine operations by U.S. Army Special Forces, support for right-wing death squads in Colombia and Bolivia, mammoth arms sales, and an indifference to the effects of powerful herbicides on the environment and water supply. Throughout the 1990s, the United States was extremely active in training Latin American and Caribbean military officers in the techniques of "foreign internal defense" (indistinguishable from state terrorism) and in attempting to quarantine Cuba as a threat to stability in the region.

The Soviet Union disintegrated because of ideological rigidity in its economic institutions, imperial overstretch, and an inability to reform. Its collapse produced a crisis of credibility for the United States. For the first forty years after World War II, the Soviet menace was the U.S.'s prime justification for its worldwide and multifaceted operations against communism. When this...
rationale for empire disappeared, it was revealed that the United States had also pursued many other, not-publicly-acknowledged objectives beyond balancing and containing the Soviet Union. The United States had grown accustomed to its hegemony over the parts of the world not dominated by the Soviet Union, and it intended to maintain and enlarge them.

When the Cold War seemed to end, the U.S. did not demobilize but instead reinforced its system of alliances and bases around the world and launched extensive strategic and intellectual efforts to find new threats and situations that demanded its policing. These included a self-declared "humanitarian war" against Serbia, renewed intervention in the Chinese civil war on behalf of Taiwan, an extremely provocative stance toward North Korea, and, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, a unilateral assertion of American hegemony over the entire world under the guise of fighting a presidentially declared war on terrorism. This led to two American wars—against Afghanistan in 2001-2002 and against Iraq in 2003—with the addition of many new military bases in both the targeted and the adjacent countries. The cockpit of American imperialism shifted to the Middle East and focused on U.S. struggles to dominate Persian Gulf oil, advance the putative interests of Israel, and ensure that the Islamic nations were unable to develop or cooperate with each other in confronting Anglo-American imperialism. Nonetheless, the traditional Cold War battlefronts in Europe, Asia, and Latin America did not disappear. The United States was preoccupied with its operations in Central and Southwest Asia, but it continued to defend and try to enlarge the enclaves it had long controlled in other parts of the world. My purpose in this essay is to try to identify the commonalities and differences among the original three Cold Wars and to point out what did not end when the Cold War itself was said to have ended.

Cold War I: Europe

Until his death in 1983, Raymond Aron was an independent French intellectual who passionately defended U.S. foreign policy in postwar Europe against the views of most other French and Western European observers. His views express clearly the conventional wisdom on the Cold War in Europe: "It was evident to anyone viewing inter-state relations in accordance with the traditional, if not eternal, categories that the aim [of the United States] in 1946 and 1947 was to prevent the Soviet Union from filling the vacuum created by the disappearance of the Third Reich and the exhaustion of the theoretically victorious older nations. ... If a United States military 'protectorate' still exists in Europe twenty years later, it is because the Europeans themselves expressed an urgent wish for it. ... Success in Europe required neither limited war, counterrevolution, nor the CIA. It should be noted that at the time Aron wrote, he was fully informed about and participated in numerous CIA operations in Europe that were in some cases similar to the totalitarian practices of the Soviet Union that he criticized. Nonetheless, his views, as far as they go, are accurate enough. The United States succeeded in Europe by default—as the French say, faute de mieux, for want of something better. The truth of the matter is that the U.S. did not so much win the European Cold War as the Soviet Union unquestionably lost it.

Stalin created the USSR's postwar empire of East European satellites by force, just as the United States created its empire of military bases in East Asia. Neither empire could or would have come into being in any other way. By the "Soviet Union's empire," I mean the seven people's democracies in Eastern Europe that formed the heart of the communist camp until its collapse in 1989—namely, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Albania, and Bulgaria. Its American equivalent was the system of satellites the United States created in East Asia, including at one time puppet regimes in Thailand, South Vietnam, the Philippines, and Taiwan but with only Japan and South Korea still retaining their Cold War status. Both superpowers also resorted to force against popular movements to hold their respective empires together—the Soviet Union in 1956 in Budapest and in 1968 in Prague; the United States from 1950 to 1953 in Korea and from 1954 to 1975 in Vietnam.
On November 9, 1989, the people of East Berlin tore down the wall that had divided their city since 1961; and on October 3, 1990, Germany was formally reunited. At the Soviet-American summit meeting in Malta in December 1989, President George H.W. Bush declared that the Cold War was over. The Americans succeeded in Europe because they were, with some qualifications, on the side of democracy. The Soviets lost the Cold War in Europe and subsequently disintegrated in part because of their overreliance on totalitarianism. Nonetheless, the alliance based on a common commitment to democracy by the United States and the leading nations of Europe became seriously frayed during the first post-Cold War decade. Because of its attempt to advance its own unacknowledged imperial project, the United States squandered the goodwill it had accumulated since the Marshall Plan. European nations became alarmed by the United States's behavior and increasingly voted with coalitions of nations intended to balance American power. Finally, in the spring of 2003, France and Germany refused to join America's illegal invasion of Iraq. Overwhelming majorities in every democratic nation on earth, including significant numbers in the United States itself, opposed unsanctioned aggression against Iraq.

Well before this climactic event, European nations were openly questioning American leadership. In November 1999, the UN, by a vote of fifty-four to four with seventy-three abstentions, adopted a resolution sponsored by Russia, China, and Belarus calling on the parties to the Antiballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 "to refrain from the deployment of antiballistic missile systems for a defense of the territory of its country and not to provide a base for such a defense." Only the U.S., Israel, Latvia, and Micronesia voted against the resolution. Thirteen of the fifteen members of the European Union abstained, while the other two, France and Ireland, voted for the resolution. Before the resolution was adopted, France proposed an amendment calling for efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It was approved by twenty-two votes to one, with ninety-five abstentions. The United States cast the only negative vote. The United States was unfazed by its isolation. On December 13, 2002, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow delivered a formal notice of President Bush's unilateral decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, which became effective six months from that date.

Similarly, only two countries, the U.S. and Somalia, refused to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which calls on nations not to recruit into their militaries individuals under the age of eighteen (the U.S. military occasionally takes a seventeen-year-old). The U.S. has also steadfastly opposed creating an International Criminal Court to try leaders charged with genocide and has refused to sign the international treaty against the use of land mines, even though both sides in Korea, where the U.S. claims they are indispensable, have started to remove the mines in order to reopen rail service between the two halves of the country.

American unilateralism is destroying the democratic coalition the U.S. forged during the European Cold War. There are many examples, perhaps the most important being the United States's program to build a comprehensive antiballistic missile defense. If actually deployed, such a system threatens to undermine all treaties that have existed for over thirty years for the prevention of nuclear war and to launch a new nuclear arms race. When combined with the October 1999 failure of the U.S. Congress to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the Pentagon's continued maintenance of a stockpile of nuclear warheads at Cold War levels, the American national missile defense (NMD) appears to Europeans as a determination to go it alone regardless of the views of the rest of the world. It should also be noted that without European cooperation, no missile defense of any sort can ever be effective since at least some of the radars on which it depends would have to be based in Greenland, which is Danish territory and is at present unavailable for American use.

In March 2002, the press exposed the Bush administration's still secret Nuclear Posture Review, actually delivered to Congress on January 8, 2002, in which it reversed a twenty-year-old policy of maintaining nuclear weapons only for deterrence and as a last resort. The new statement listed seven countries as potential future nuclear targets: Russia, Iraq, Iran, North
Korea, China, Libya, and Syria. The review specifically cited a military confrontation with China over the status of Taiwan as an instance in which the United States might resort to nuclear weapons. In May 2002, the United States actually signed a treaty with Russia in which both countries pledged to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals to between 1,700 and 2,200 warheads over a ten-year period. However, this development was vitiated by the United States's insistence that rather than destroy its warheads it would merely put them in storage. There was also no parallel agreement addressing Russia's concerns about the U.S.'s development of a missile defense system.

These are not mere differences in capabilities or perspectives between the U.S. and its European allies. Paul H. Nitze, perhaps the most experienced of all American Cold War strategists, has concluded, "I can think of no circumstances under which it would be wise for the United States to use nuclear weapons, even in retaliation for their prior use against us. ... It is the presence of nuclear weapons that threatens our existence. ... It would be safe now to dispose, unilaterally, of our nuclear arsenal." Nitze argues that the development of precision-guided conventional munitions has rendered nuclear weapons obsolete. An equally qualified strategist, General George Lee Butler, a thirty-three-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force and in 1991 commander of the Strategic Air Command, asks, "How [can one] fathom a historical view that can witness the collapse of communism but fail to imagine a world rid of nuclear weapons?" General Butler advocates abolishing the command he used to head. "Surely," he writes, "we still comprehend that to threaten the deaths of tens or hundreds of millions of people presages an atrocity beyond anything in the record of mankind." That such comprehension does not and may never exist is suggested by the hysteria in the United States during 1999 and 2000 over whether China had stolen American nuclear secrets and the search for a Chinese spy within the American nuclear weapons laboratories.

During the Cold War the United States regarded Western Europe as the ultimate domino, the area of the world that could not under any circumstances be lost to the Soviet Union. The U.S. therefore built there its strongest alliances and even went along with the futile efforts of Britain, France, and the Netherlands to reestablish their colonial empires in East Asia. But America's imperial pretensions are now unraveling these transatlantic ties, as are many issues other than nuclear weaponry. So far from admiring America's values, many Europeans see the frequent use of the death penalty in the United States as openly racist. Similarly, the early release from a six-months' prison sentence of Marine Captain Richard Ashby, who piloted the jet that in February 1998 cut a skiers' gondola cable in northern Italy and plunged twenty vacationers to their deaths, seems to reflect America's imperial arrogance. Equally irritating to Europeans is America's illicit reading of every fax, telex, e-mail, phone call, and computer data message transmitted by satellite around the world and, since 1971, its attaching tapping pods to most underwater cables—the so-called Echelon program—particularly since Echelon's "collection requirements" include the private economic activities of America's leading allies.

Even NATO's one and only war, the bombing of Serbia and Kosovo during the spring of 1999, seriously divided the members of NATO. What looked like a belated intervention by the democracies against Serbia's ethnic cleansing turned out to be a demonstration of America's military technology and led to charges of war crimes. China claimed that the war in Kosovo was merely a test of America's advanced weaponry, and this is why NATO intervened without UN or other legal sanction and why more Chinese died in the war (as a result of the American bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade) than Americans, who suffered no casualties at all. Amnesty International concluded that the bombing of Radio Television Serbia on April 23, 1999, "was a deliberate attack on a civilian object and as such constitutes a war crime," and Human Rights Watch found that of the approximately 500 Yugoslav civilians killed, "half died because of NATO violations of laws and practices on protecting civilians." The Cold War in Europe is over, but that development has not ushered in a period of stable peace—largely because the United States government had and still has other objectives. In
retrospect it appears that both the Soviet Union and the United States lost the Cold War in Europe. Even more ironic, America's military adventurism in Iraq produced a working cooperation among France, Germany, and Russia—something that American foreign policy long sought to forestall—and did more to compel the unifying of Europe, including its acquisition of a military capability, than any other international event. Nowhere did America's Cold War triumphalism result in greater and less easily reversed net losses.

**Cold War II: East Asia**

The greatest single disaster in post—World War II American foreign policy was the failure of the U.S. to understand and adjust to the Chinese revolution. This failure started during World War II and persists to the present day. Ever since it became clear, shortly after Japan's surrender in the summer of 1945, that China would be convulsed by civil war and that the likely victor would be the Chinese Communist Party, the United States has been obsessed by China's growing power and by the potential challenge a renascent China might offer to American hegemony in East Asia and ultimately to its covert Cold War project to create a global capitalist order led by the United States. Except for the two decades after Nixon's 1971 opening of a dialogue with China and his aligning the U.S. with China against the Soviet Union, American Cold War policy in East Asia has been hostile to China. Today, with China's own redirection of its efforts to catch up economically with the rest of East Asia, American policy still vacillates—on the one hand it seeks to profit from and tries to influence China's economic development while on the other it maintains massive military forces directed against China and contends that the only thing maintaining stability in East Asia is the presence of these American military forces.

All the major elements of postwar American imperialism in East Asia follow from this obsession with China. They include the decision to end the immediate postwar efforts to democratize Japan and instead to make it into the primary American base for military operations in East Asia. A corollary of this policy was to isolate Japan economically from its traditional markets in China. As a consequence, in order for Japan to regain any form of economic viability, the U.S. had to open its own market to Japan on uniquely favorable terms. As the American embassy in Tokyo reported to the Department of State in 1960, "Our economic policy accorded Japan a fair and reasonable share of our market as premise and precondition for U.S.-Japan relationships in political and security fields and has led to substantial expansion of Japanese exports, making possible Japan's present economic prosperity."15 This policy is still in effect today—in return for basing 100,000 American troops in Japan and South Korea, Japan still takes as its due privileged access to the American economy and protectionist barriers against American sales and investment in the Japanese market. The result is huge excess capacity in Japan, the severe hollowing out of American manufacturing industries, and the largest trade imbalances (in favor of Japan) ever recorded between two economies.

At the time of the proclamation of the Chinese People's Republic in October 1949, the United States could not decide what to do. Should it follow normal international practice and recognize the new regime or succumb to the gathering forces of reaction and McCarthyism within the United States and pretend that Chiang Kai-shek's regime in exile in Taiwan still represented China? As James L. Peck has shown, the outbreak of war in Korea on June 25, 1950, provided a way out of this dilemma.16 Even though the U.S. entered the Korean War with UN sanction, its simultaneous action to prevent the Chinese Communists from taking over Taiwan was purely unilateral and created what is today still one of the most volatile issues in international relations in the Pacific. For the first two decades after 1949, the United States recognized the regime in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China, supported Taiwan as the occupant of China's permanent seat in the UN, maintained a total economic embargo
against the mainland, and, despite massive evidence to the contrary, tried to characterize the Chinese revolution as a manifestation of Soviet imperialism. Chiang Kai-shek became the model for a long list of military dictators whom the United States installed, sponsored, or protected in Taiwan, South Korea, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia because they were anticomunist. Like Chiang and many of his counterparts in the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, most of these dictators were corrupt, brutal, and incompetent. Nowhere in East Asia did the United States promote democracy; its belated appearance in the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan came about as a result of domestic protest movements against what had become increasingly unpopular American-supported regimes.

The United States fought savage wars with China—literally in Korea and figuratively in Vietnam, where it sought to discredit Mao’s theory of people’s war. The latter provoked serious divisions within the American electorate and contributed to the United States’s growing reputation as an imperialist bully. More than anything else, however, these wars gave the conduct of American foreign relations outside of Europe its special characteristics—a reliance on abstract formulae and slogans (such as a global communist conspiracy, counterinsurgency, the free world, captive nations) rather than undertaking serious empirical investigations of local political and economic conditions; excessive use of the American military and employment of undue violence; and clandestine operations to unseat inconvenient governments or to prop up unpopular but pro-American ones (in Iran, Guatemala, Japan, the Bay of Pigs, the Congo, South Korea, South Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Indonesia, Chile, Angola, Nicaragua, Somalia, and Haiti to name only the best-known cases). By the time the Soviet Union had disappeared, dependence on these methods had almost totally replaced America’s traditional use of diplomacy, foreign aid, and efforts to project the United States as a model for other nations.

The fundamental basis of the Cold War in Europe was a struggle between totalitarianism and democracy; the USSR was on the wrong side of this confrontation. The fundamental basis of the Cold War in East Asia was a struggle for liberation from prewar European, American, and Japanese colonialism; the United States was on the wrong side of this struggle. Despite knowing that most of the revolts in East Asia were driven by popular domestic nationalism, the U.S. persisted in characterizing these movements as led by Communists taking orders from Moscow. Such myopia also propelled the United States into the fatal blunder of supporting attempts by the European powers to reclaim their East Asian colonies after they had been driven from them by Japanese armies during World War II. Even in South Korea, in setting up its puppet regime, the United States propped up numerous Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese colonialists. In no place did these American policies succeed; in Vietnam, American ideological rigidity came close to producing a revolution within its own society—the ultimate form of blowback from ill-conceived foreign operations. Today, when anticolonial nationalism has proven victorious everywhere in East Asia (except for the still-divided Korea), there is a legacy of distrust of American motives because the U.S. for so long failed to appreciate the force of these nationalisms.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the United States initially seemed to accept that some relaxation of its imperial controls over East Asia was appropriate. In 1992, it allowed the Philippines to expel the U.S. Navy from its largest overseas base, at Subic Bay, and it undertook some minor cuts in its deployed military forces. It also shifted its foreign policy toward Japan to emphasize the inequitable economic relations between the two countries rather than the strengthening of American military bases. In 1993, the American-created single-party regime in Japan collapsed owing to the irrelevance of its sole qualification for holding power—
anticommunism—and the U.S. did nothing to save it. Nonetheless, almost instantly after the disappearance of the Soviet Union, American strategists, aided by China’s repression of protesters at Tiananmen in 1989, began to vilify China and to make a domestic case that China was the successor to the USSR and the justification for America’s global hegemony.

By 1995, the United States had fully recovered its imperialist acumen. The Pentagon’s Nye Report of 1995 authorized the permanent basing of 100,000 U.S. troops in Japan and South Korea, and a new visiting-forces agreement was signed with the Philippines by which U.S. troops were reintroduced there.17 Meanwhile, the Liberal Democratic Party returned to power in Japan and resumed its unprecedented trade surpluses with the U.S. despite (or because of) its own faltering economy. The 1997 Asian economic meltdown that began in Thailand, South Korea, and Indonesia revealed the dangers of their having followed American economic advice and pressure. It also had the effect of discrediting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its Asian Regional Forum as nascent multilateral organizations capable of dealing with East Asian problems without outside interference. The United States was back, fully committed to maintaining its empire in the Asia-Pacific region even though it was still engaged in an internal argument over whether it should engage China or try to contain it.

One key element of post—Cold War American imperialism in the area has been a persistent exaggeration of alleged threats posed by two of the remaining, formally communist countries of the area—China and North Korea. In May 1999, for example, the U.S. Congress issued its so-called Cox Report, named after Christopher Cox, a Republican representative from Newport Beach, California. Cox claimed that China had pilfered secret data on seven of the U.S.’s most advanced thermonuclear weapons. He also said that the stolen information included computer codes, allegedly essential to the design of nuclear warheads, which most likely came from secret computers at America’s nuclear weapons laboratories. Led by the New York Times, the mass media sensationalized this report and set off a hunt for a spy at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. A New York Times editorial contended, "The Cox Committee has performed an invaluable service with its unsparing investigation."18

Needless to say, the spy was soon found in the person of an American scientist of Chinese ancestry (from Taiwan, not China), Wen-ho Lee. Federal authorities threatened Lee with death (like the Rosen-bergs), tried to extract a confession from him, and then confined him in a jail in New Mexico under conditions similar to those the French imposed on Captain Alfred Dreyfus when they sentenced him to Devil’s Island. The whole case ultimately fell apart for lack of evidence, and it also seemed likely that the Department of Energy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation had singled out Lee (as the French did Dreyfus) because of his race. Anti-Semitism and anti-Chinese racism were at the heart of both famous spy manias. When an FBI agent admitted to a federal judge that he had lied in his testimony against Lee, the government sought a plea bargain arrangement that freed Lee.

Early in the case, journalist Robert Scheer of the Los Angeles Times—the Emile Zola of this affair—wrote, "The China threat exists only in the minds of politicians who are playing fast with national security concerns and the New York Times, which was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for publicizing their most stark warnings."19 Over a year later, even the New York Times sought to excuse its behavior. It said it had been misled by "government officials who previously insisted that the downloaded data contained the ‘crown jewels’ of America’s nuclear arsenal that could change the global balance of power if transferred to a hostile power."20 China, it seems, still inspires McCarthyism in the United States.21

The other great focus of America’s exaggeration of supposed military threats from East Asia has been North Korea. The Pentagon has based much of its case for a national missile defense on North Korea’s alleged development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. But the evidence for these capabilities has repeatedly failed to stand up. For example, during 1998 and 1999, Lt. Gen. Patrick Hughes, then head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, circulated to members of Congress raw intelligence that he said showed North Korea was secretly building
an underground nuclear reactor. When the Americans exerted pressure on North Korea to inspect the place Hughes had identified as the site of the hidden plant, it was found not only to contain no machinery of any kind but to be too small to have contained a reactor. When the Americans returned in May 2000 for a further inspection, it was still empty.22

Even more embarrassing, in November 1999, the Space Imaging Company of Thornton, Colorado, used its own private spy satellite, the Ikonos, to photograph the alleged North Korean missile-launch site. The Ikonos has a resolving power down to one meter, which is comparable to military surveillance satellites. Looking at the Ikonos pictures, the Federation of American Scientists declared, "It is quite evident that this facility was not intended to support, and in many respects is incapable of supporting, the extensive test program that would be needed to fully develop a reliable missile system." It called the North Korean base, completed in 1988, "barely worthy of note, consisting of the most minimal imaginable test infrastructure." The Ikonos pictures also called into doubt the steady stream of intelligence on North Korea then coming from South Korean sources: one of Seoul's alleged North Korean defectors had said that all agricultural villages had been removed from the vicinity of the test site but there they still were in the new pictures.23

Despite many such cases, members of the U.S. Congress refused to accept that the Cold War in East Asia could be ending. On July 27, 2000, well after the Koreans had already launched their own peace initiatives, the House of Representatives Policy Committee, whose chairman is the hyperbolic Christopher Cox, released a report on the situation there. Its opening lines are: "North Korea is not merely a dictatorship: it is a uniquely monstrous tyranny that has tormented the Korean people for half a century, creating the most completely totalitarian and militarized state in human history. Today, even while North Korea is faltering on the edge of economic collapse, it poses one of the greatest threats to American and allied interests anywhere around the globe."24

More ominous in its long-term implications than such propaganda, the Pentagon has on numerous occasions asserted that even if the two halves of Korea were reunited, it intends to keep a military force based there.25 Since South Korea vastly exceeds North Korea in expenditures on weapons and is twice as populous and at least twenty-five times richer than its northern counterpart, the American military is clearly not needed for its defense.26 The American presence there is, in fact, a warning to China that the United States intends to preserve its imperial enclaves in the East Asian area.

Under the George W. Bush administration, America's relations with North Korea steadily worsened. In September 2002, the White House asserted in its National Security Strategy a right to wage preventive war. This rhetoric gained an almost immediate reality for North Korean leader Kim Jong II and his associates when the Americans began to mobilize a powerful invasion force on the borders of Iraq, also included in Bush's list of nations targeted for regime change. Watching Iraq being destroyed by the world's richest and most heavily armed country, North Korea prepared to defend itself in the only way it thought the Americans could understand. It withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, expelled international inspectors, and restarted an old power reactor that it had mothballed in accordance with the North Korean-U.S. agreement of 1994.

On April 6, 2003, Pyongyang announced that only by arming itself with a "tremendous military deterrent" could it guarantee its own security. "The Iraqi war shows that to allow disarming through inspection does not help avert a war but rather sparks it. ... This suggests that even the signing of a nonaggression treaty with the U.S. would not help avert a war." Much like a comment attributed to Winston Churchill during the Battle of Britain, North Korea was now telling its citizens, "If you've got to go, take one with you." The places it threatens to take with it are Seoul and its population of eleven million, the thirty-eight American bases on Okinawa, and as many Japanese cities as it can hit (though in actual fact it may not have the capability of reaching as far as either Okinawa or the Japanese mainland with nuclear-tipped missiles). At
the very least, however, were it to arm itself with nuclear weapons, it would certainly spark a nuclear arms race in East Asia.

During 2002 and 2003, South Korean public opinion shifted radically on the issue of North Korea. The prosperous and well-informed people of the South know that their fellow Koreans, hungry, desperate, oppressed but exceedingly well-armed, are trapped by the ironies of the end of the Cold War and by the harshness of the Kim Jong Il regime, but are also being pushed into an exceedingly dangerous corner by the pride and arrogance of the Americans in their newly proclaimed role as the reigning global military colossus. The South no longer much fears the North—so long as it is not being pushed to extreme acts by Washington. They fear instead the enthusiasm for war emanating from Washington and the constant problems generated by American troops based in South Korea over the past fifty years.

North Korea has been attempting, albeit fitfully and with great trepidation, to come in from the cold in somewhat the same way China did so successfully over the past twenty years. As Kim Dae Jung understood, the U.S. and South Korea should be magnanimous winners instead of megalomaniacal warmongers. No surrounding nation—not the Republic of Korea, nor Japan, nor China, nor Russia—wants or sees the need for a renewed civil war on the Korean peninsula. Now that the generation that fought the Korean War in the South, the North, and the United States is passing from the scene, the time is ripe for younger people with more flexible approaches to resolve this last remaining Cold War legacy—a hostile peninsula divided at the DMZ. It is only in the U.S. that the departure of this generation seems to have created such a case of historical amnesia that a new generation is prepared to start a war there all over again.

Equally irresponsibly, the United States has started to upgrade its extensive military relationship with Taiwan. Since the mainland-Taiwan military confrontation of 1996 (which occurred on the eve of Taiwanese elections and was intended to prevent a unilateral Taiwanese declaration of independence), the Clinton administration authorized the Pentagon, in the words of the veteran China correspondent Jim Mann, "to conduct the kind of strategic dialogue with Taiwan's armed forces that had not been permitted by any administration since 1979."

Taiwan is one of the United States's wealthiest customers for weapons, and it already possesses a retaliatory capacity against mainland China that effectively neutralizes the threat of genuine combat in the Taiwan Strait. The real danger is that war could result because of political miscalculations. China has repeatedly indicated that it does not want to incorporate Taiwan through the use of military force. At the same time, it cannot tolerate a unilateral secession of what by every principle and precedent of international law is its territory. Given the blunders of the United States fifty years ago, there is no solution to the Taiwan problem. Only the maintenance of the status quo and a further passage of time can offer any resolution. Unfortunately, United States imperialist pretensions stand in the way of such prudence.

Cold War III: Latin America

It is said that dead men tell no tales, but in Latin America they are speaking with exceptional clarity—revealing the sordid details of U.S. Cold War foreign policy toward the area. In 1992, in Asuncion, Paraguay, a survivor of the regime of former dictator General Alfredo Stroessner stumbled on five tons of reports and photographs left over from Operation Condor. This operation, begun in 1975, was a cooperative effort among military and police officials of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia to identify, torture, and kill as many representatives of workers and advocates of democracy as they could find. Such records also exist in other Latin American countries, but in the words of Juan Garces, the Spanish lawyer who brought the 1998 suit against General Augusto Pinochet of Chile on charges of genocide, "in Paraguay they didn't manage to hide it all." Baltazar Garzon, the Spanish judge who sought the extradition of Pinochet from England after his arrest there on October 16, 1998 (and, more
recently of Argentine generals and admirals), collected more than 1,500 pages of evidence from the archives before American officials moved in to sanitize them.

Elsewhere in Latin America, incriminating archives of terror are also coming to light. In June 2000, an Argentine judge asked Brazil for information about three Argentine citizens who disappeared in Brazil when both countries were under military rule. To the surprise of virtually all observers, Brazil's highest court ordered that all documents relating to Operation Condor be turned over to Argentine authorities.29

At El Aguacate, eighty miles east of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, at the abandoned military base the U.S. built in 1983 to wage what the Associated Press calls its "Cold War fight against communism," jail cells and the bodies of torture victims have been uncovered. El Aguacate is just one of several sites in Honduras being investigated on the basis of witnesses' testimony and records. During the 1980s, Honduras was the CIA's largest station on earth; it was used to train some 14,000 Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries (Contras) for operations across the border.30

On August 24, 2000, acting on a warrant for extradition signed by Judge Garzon, Mexican authorities arrested Ricardo Miguel Cavallo at Cancun while he was trying to flee the country back to Argentina. Many victims of the Argentine junta, 1976-1983, have identified Cavallo as "Serpico," the head torturer at the Escuela Mecanica located inside naval headquarters at Buenos Aires. The arrest was unprecedented since Mexico usually resists all efforts to extradite fugitives within its borders. As the New York Times put it, "[Mexico] became a kind of haven for Latin American military officers suspected of cold-war crimes, just as Argentina once was a refuge for Nazis."31 During the reign of the Argentine junta, military officers killed at least 30,000 people, and another 5,000 disappeared. Their relatives invented a new term for them, los desaparacidos. Between 1991 and 1998, a small unit in the Argentine Ministry of Health treated some 31,102 torture victims. To this day no torturer has been investigated or tried, and no compensation has been paid.32

The breakthrough in producing these and other revelations about the Cold War in Latin America was the arrest of Pinochet in England. Until that time the United States remained absolutely tight-lipped about the CIA's knowledge of and participation in the Chilean military's overthrow of Salvador Allende in 1973 and about the roles of graduates of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas in Operation Condor. But Spain's request for Pinochet's extradition caused many of his victims in Latin America and Europe to speak out and this forced the United States at least to pretend to cooperate in an international effort to reveal the truth about crimes against humanity in which it had been implicated.

There are also two high-profile cases involving the United States directly that had never been resolved—the 1973 murders in Santiago by Pinochet's secret police unit, DINA (Direccion de Inteligencia Nacional), of two U.S. citizens, Charles Herman, age thirty-one a film-maker and writer, and his colleague Frank Teruggi, age twenty-four; and DINA's assassination on September 26, 1976, in Washington of the former Chilean ambassador to the United States, Orlando Letelier, and his twenty-five-year-old American companion, Ronni Karpen Moffitt.

In January 2000, the British Home Secretary Jack Hall tried to spare the United States embarrassment by denying Spain's warrant for extradition and allowing Pinochet to return to Chile. However, the preferential treatment of Pinochet kept the issue of his crimes alive, and President Clinton ordered the CIA to make public its files on the Pinochet regime. It has yet to do so completely and, in August 2000, CIA director George Tenet defied the president and refused to declassify records that he said "would reveal too much about CIA sources and methods."33 But it was too late. Enough has already been released under Clinton's order to make clear the role played by the United States in Latin America under cover of the Cold War.

The "methods" that the CIA declines to reveal to the American public include its routine practice of turning over the names of people it wants executed to military and police authorities that it has trained and helped put in power. It can then pretend that it had nothing to do with their
subsequent deaths, even expressing shock and disappointment at the excesses of its former pupils. This was the pattern of American operations in Indonesia from General Suharto's rise to power in 1965 to the American refusal in the autumn of 1999 to get involved in rescuing the victims of Indonesian army terror in East Timor. The CIA employed these same methods in bringing Pinochet to power and in its relations with Operation Condor.

In 1982, the French film director Constantin Costa-Gavras released Missing, his motion picture about the deaths of Horman and Teruggi. Twenty years after it was first shown, virtually all of the details in the film have now been confirmed, including the execution of the two young men on September 19, 1973, in the Santiago sports arena because they knew too much about American involvement in the military coup that had just taken place on September 11. The film's scenes of Herman's wife's repeatedly asking State Department officers "Can they order an American to disappear without consulting the Americans first?" and the American military and naval attaches prodding the wife to give them the names of all of her husband's Chilean friends have been substantiated by newly released documents. When the American ambassador is portrayed as saying to Horman's father that his son was probably kidnapped by leftists in order to embarrass the new government, we now know this was typical of the U.S. embassy's activities at the time of Allende's overthrow.

The documents the State Department released in February 2000 had been divulged in 1980 but now previously blacked-out sections were restored. These new sections make clear that the State Department knew from virtually the day of their disappearance that the two Americans had been killed by Pinochet. Embassy officials further speculated that "the Chileans would not have done so without a green light from U.S. intelligence." The New York Times has also noted that "American intelligence and military officials may have encouraged General Augusto Pinochet's security forces to round them up even though it was clear that the two men, like thousands of Chileans arrested during the same period, were likely to be mistreated, if not killed."

The assassination of Letelier is even more damning. After having served as foreign minister in the Allende government, he came to Washington in 1975 as an associate fellow of the Institute of Policy Studies and professor of international relations at American University. He was killed in a car-bomb explosion on the orders of General Manuel Contreras, the director of DINA. All of this has long been known. What is new is that on September 18, 2000, the CIA released a document revealing for the first time that in 1975 General Contreras was "a paid CIA asset" and that contacts with him continued long after he had dispatched his agents to Washington to kill Letelier.

This revelation about Contreras is just one important instance within a general pattern. The Asuncion archives showed that "United States officials backed Condor nations not only with military aid but also with information" and that U.S. Army Colonel Robert Thierry helped General Stroessner set up his police-state apparatus and train his police officers. They also showed that FBI operatives had supplied the Pinochet regime with the names of Chileans in their files. "The F.B.I, [has] defended the sharing of information with Chile as standard practice among law enforcement agencies of governments friendly to Washington. In the July 2000 release of documents on Chile that President Clinton ordered, the FBI disclosed for the first time that it had collected information on the activities in Chile of Frank R. Teruggi, whose bullet-ridden body was found in the Santiago morgue ten days after he disappeared. The Brazil files disclosed that "The first known mention of Operation Condor came in a 1976 cable from the American Embassy in Buenos Aires, and American agents worked closely with security officials in the region, many of whom had studied at the United States—run School of the Americas."

The Cold War in Latin America is different from those in Europe or East Asia. Long before the issue of communism appeared in the Americas, the United States had been intervening economically and militarily to support American corporations and to prevent the development of governments backed by strong populist movements. As early as 1953, well before the arrival of Fidel Castro on the scene and looking forward to the CIA's overthrow the following year of
Guatemala's democratic government, the National Security Council wrote in a highly classified statement of American policy toward the area: "There is a trend in Latin America toward nationalistic regimes maintained in large part by appeals to the masses of the population. . . . It is essential to arrest the drift in the area toward radical and nationalistic regimes."41

The 1959 Cuban revolution turned out to be an ideological godsend for the United States. The U.S. had long sought some way to redirect popular resentment in Latin America away from the exploitative activities of American multinational corporations—including the United Fruit Company in Central America and the copper-mining companies in Chile.Positing a communist threat to the area was the best strategy the United States had ever found. Fidel and Che lent great credibility to the United States's old fears about outside forces threatening the independence of its Latin American neighbors. Recognizing that there was no way it could rely on democratic forces in Latin America, since they knew all too well which foreign country was actually threatening their independence, the United States therefore turned to the armies of Latin America for its allies and preferred political leaders.

One of the most important institutions of American foreign policy is the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, founded in Panama in 1946 and moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1984 after Panamanian President Jorge Illueca called it "the biggest base for destabilization in Latin America" and evicted it. Its curriculum includes counterinsurgency, military intelligence, interrogation techniques, sniper fire, infantry and commando tactics, psychological warfare, and jungle operations.42 Although some members of Congress have long tried to shut it down, the Pentagon and the White House have always found ways to keep it in the budget. In May 2000, the Clinton administration sought to provide new camouflage for the school by changing its name to the Defense Institute for Hemispheric Security Cooperation and transferring authority over it from the Department of the Army to the Department of Defense. Congressman Joseph Moakley (D-Massachusetts) referred to this reform as "putting perfume on a toxic dump" and continued, "The School of the Americas has trained some of the most brutal assassins, some of the crudest dictators, and some of the worst abusers of human rights the Western Hemisphere has ever seen. If we don't stand for human rights down in Georgia, how can we possibly expect to promote them anywhere else in the world?"43

The School of the Americas (SOA, also known in Latin America as the School of Assassins) has trained over 60,000 military and police officers from Latin American and Caribbean countries. Among SOA's most illustrious graduates are the dictators Manuel Noriega (who is serving a forty-year sentence in an American jail for drug trafficking) and Omar Torrijos of Panama; Guillermo Rodrigues of Ecuador; Juan Velasco Alvarado of Peru; Leopoldo Galtieri, former head of Argentina's junta; and Hugo Banzer Suarez of Bolivia. Other alumni include the former military officer and leader of the Salvadoran death squads, Roberto D'Aubuisson, who according to the United Nations Truth Commission for El Salvador, orchestrated the assassination on March 24, 1980, of the archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Romero, and helped plan the assault by the U.S.-trained Atlacatl Battalion against El Mozote village on December 11, 1981, that killed some 767 unarmed men, women, and children. The UN Commission recovered as many shell casings as it could find at El Mozote. All were stamped as having been manufactured for the U.S. government at Lake City, Missouri.

An equally prominent participant in Operation Condor and a graduate of the SOA is Colonel Pablo Belmar of the Chilean DINA. He was one of thirty officers named in the 1998 Spanish human rights case against General Pinochet. Colonel Belmar was charged with being a participant in the torture and murder in 1976 in Santiago of Carmelo Soria, a UN official and Spanish citizen. Soria's car and body were dumped in a Santiago canal in order to make his death appear accidental. Colonel Belmar graduated from SOA's basic arms orientation course in 1968 and was invited back to Fort Benning in 1987 as a guest instructor of human rights.

According to the human rights organization School of the Americas Watch, one out of every seven commanders of DINA was a graduate of SOA. A typical graduate, 1st Lt. Armando
Fernandez Larios, class of 1970, was one of two DINA agents who in 1974 killed General Carlos Prats Gonzalez, Allende's defense minister, and his wife in Buenos Aires. He was also indicted by a U.S. grand jury in 1979 for his involvement in the assassination of Letelier in Washington, D.C. Both General Prats and Letelier were murdered with car bombs. Augusto Pinochet himself did not study at the SOA, but he gave the school a ceremonial sword that in 1991 was on prominent display in the office of the commandant.

The end of Operation Condor did not bring an end to the tortures, murders, and disappearances of advocates of democracy in Latin America. The name of Vladimiro Montesinos, SOA class of 1965, was prominently in the news in 2000 when as head of Peruvian military intelligence and President Alberto Fujimori's closest adviser, he was caught bribing an opposition politician. The United States helped him escape into exile in Panama. The Americas Watch Report on human rights in Peru claims that Montesinos was responsible for the disappearances of nine university students and a professor on July 18, 1992. Four officers have testified that Montesinos took an active part in torturing them. Not incidentally, Montesinos has also been implicated in deals to sell 10,000 AK-47 assault rifles to the PARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), Colombia's largest guerrilla group.

Colombia has sent over 10,000 soldiers to train at the SOA, more than any other country. Both Human Rights Watch and the Department of State in their annual reports on Colombia link SOA graduates to the Colombian military and paramilitary death squads and to murders, kidnappings, and thefts that occurred in 1999. The presence of so many SOA graduates in Colombia is probably one element behind the United States's decision during July 2000 to open full military operations there. According to U.S. estimates, 40 percent of Colombian territory is held by either two Colombian rebel groups or by right-wing paramilitaries allied with the Colombian Army. Although Colombia was already the third largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid in the world, the amount it will receive rose spectacularly after the installation of George W. Bush as president. The American Seventh Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, has been sent to train Colombian troops at a secret base near the confluence of the Caquetá and Orteguaza Rivers. The American embassy in Bogota has declared the area off-limits to all foreign and domestic journalists.

Even though the Colombian civil war is at least thirty-six years old, the United States has become alarmed about the growing production of cocaine in rebel-held territory. It has therefore formulated a $7.5 billion strategy, called Plan Colombia, to train three anti-narcotic battalions, composed of 3,000 Colombian soldiers, who will be flown into combat aboard sixty Huey-2 and Black Hawk helicopters that the U.S. has supplied. PARC's coca laboratories are actually located in the Peruvian jungles, and cocaine is transported down the Amazon River to the United States and Europe, just as the river is used to import munitions. PARC has also threatened to invade Ecuador if the U.S. uses it as a base for aerial operations. The probability is therefore high that all the countries that border on Colombia will become embroiled in a general insurgency. The United States also plans a campaign of aerial defoliation against Colombian fields using a new, not fully-tested biological fungicide. Brazil fears that runoff from these operations will poison the region's waters and that direct military operations will push thousands of Colombian refugees into the Brazilian state of Ama-zonas. According to the late journalist Tad Szulc, Plan Colombia, like U.S. operations in Vietnam, was "developed by men and women who know little of Colombia's history, culture, and politics."

Three years after its inception, the American counterinsurgency in Colombia was a dreadful failure. During 2002, PARC killed nine local mayors and forced hundreds to resign, while, as reported by Peter Clark, the paramilitaries were responsible for most of the 184 assassinations of trade unionists—by far the highest rate in the world. Cocaine continued to be widely available in the United States, and the amount of land in the Andean countries devoted to coca cultivation, about 540,000 acres, remained stable for the past fifteen years. America's money
spent on Colombia has been almost entirely wasted. The struggle there offers yet another illustration that the muscle-bound American military is ineffective as an instrument of sociopolitical policy.

The attitudes and policies that underlie American post—Cold War triumphalism are not easily changed. They have their roots in the tense postwar situation in Europe, the United States’s obsession with China following the communist victory there, and the discovery that anticommunism could advance traditional American interests in Latin America. The imperialism that was bolstered by these ideological positions was always there but came into the open only with the end of the European Cold War and the United States’s trumpeting of its status as the "last remaining superpower."

These tendencies were greatly exacerbated by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The president claimed that the United States was declaring war on terrorism although he failed to follow up legally, in terms of the constitutional stipulations requiring that Congress declare war. The undeclared war on terrorism allowed the government to whip up patriotic fervor and to suppress discussion of the attackers’ motives. Any attempt to explain why the terrorists felt justified in attacking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was denounced as "siding with the terrorists," as Attorney General John Ashcroft did in Congressional testimony. One result was that politicians worldwide instantly hijacked the concept and redesignated their own enemies as terrorists, claiming to be following the example of the United States in attacking them militarily. In the Middle East, the Israeli government abandoned all efforts to achieve peace with the Palestinians and instead attacked them with tanks and helicopter gunships; and in South Asia, the United States found itself drawn into the fifty-five-year-old Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. This latter longstanding conflict threatens nuclear war between the two countries, which both claim Kashmir. The United States’s declaration of war on terrorism has greatly accelerated the imperial overstretch that the United States was already experiencing before the end of the Cold War in Europe. The danger is that the United States may insensibly be following in the footsteps of the Soviet Union, its erstwhile superpower competitor. The delusions of Cold War triumphalism contributed mightily to this development.

Chapter 8
The Three Cold Wars


30. Freddy Cuevas, Associated Press, "Military Base or Murder Scene?" San Diego Union-
41. NSC 144, March 4, 1953; quoted in Peck, "Ideal Illusions," 73.
44. See http://www.soaw.org, s. v. School of the Americas Graduates.