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Review

The American Mission?

By [William Pfaff](#)

William Pfaff *Fear, Anger and Failure: A Chronicle of the Bush Administration's War on Terror, from the Attacks of September 11, 2001 to Defeat in Baghdad in 2003*, has just been published. His syndicated newspaper column appears in *The International Herald Tribune*. (April 2004). Zbigniew Brzezinski was National Security Advisor to President Carter during the late 1970s.

[The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership](#)

by Zbigniew Brzezinski

Basic Books, 242 pp., \$25.00

1.

Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Choice* is superficially an election-year foreign policy *tour d'horizon*, more sophisticated in analysis and recommendations, and certainly more statesmanlike in temper, than current writings by the Bush administration's supporters. It is a nuanced expression of the conventional wisdom among American foreign policy experts, and a condemnation of the self-defeating arrogance of the Bush administration's conduct during the past two and a half years.



Zbigniew Brzezinski
(click for larger image)

"'Globalization' in its essence means global interdependence," Brzezinski writes. Therefore the American choice today is between attempting to create "a new global system based on shared interests," or attempting to "use its sovereign global power primarily to entrench its own security." The latter risks ending in "self-isolation, growing national paranoia, and increasing vulnerability to a globally spreading anti-American virus." There would even be a risk of the United States becoming a garrison state.

One might think there are other, wider possibilities for a United States uneasily enjoying its "unilateral moment" (as the neoconservatives put it), while seeing itself as "the indispensable nation...standing taller because it sees further" (as the last Democratic secretary of state said). However, Brzezinski implicitly rejects the notion that the United States might be better off if it modified its notion of national mission and concomitant aggrandizement of national power in acknowledgment of the good sense in George

Kennan's counsel (in this journal over four years ago) that for Americans "to see ourselves as the center of political enlightenment and as teachers to a great part of the rest of the world [is] unthought-through, vainglorious, and undesirable." Kennan added that "this planet is never going to be ruled from any single political center, whatever its military power."^[1]

Brzezinski's book therefore needs to be considered at two levels. The first is within the political assumptions in which it has been written, undoubtedly shared by most American foreign policy analysts and political figures today. The second would take account of the skeptical perspective articulated by Kennan and question the assumptions widely held among American officials and experts concerning the desirability or happy inevitability, and benevolent consequences, of American global hegemony.

Following the cold war, Americans went through a period of some uncertainty about what our foreign policy should be. A cause around which the country could be mobilized was lacking. A certain consensus of concern formed around the related issues of nuclear proliferation, the existence of the so-called rogue nations such as Iraq and North Korea, and the problem presented by "failed" nations such as Somalia. This developed against a background of anxiety about the growing hostility of the Islamic states toward the US, coincident with Samuel Huntington's argument that a war between civilizations was on its way. The attacks of September 2001 brought uncertainty to an end. The Bush administration launched its "War on Terror," which despite President Bush's explicit denial that Islam was at fault, was widely and emotionally seen as resembling a war between civilizations, with Islamic militants taken as representative of much of Islam and the United States as champion of the West (uneasily followed by its traditional allies).

Many objected to the President's Manichaeic proclamations ("with us or against us!"), the administration's hostility to international organizations, and its summary treatment of allies. Brzezinski is very perceptive about the curiously widespread and enduring fear caused in the United States by the attacks. Horrible as the attacks were, this reaction, he points out, was irrational:

At what point does even a justifiable national preoccupation with domestic security cross the invisible line dividing prudence from paranoia?... Total security and total defense in the age of globalization are not attainable.

Nonetheless, a quasi paranoia was officially fostered following the Trade Center towers and the Pentagon attacks (and since), as was an intellectually incoherent elevation (as Brzezinski notes) by the Bush government of terrorism, a tactic or method of combat employed throughout the ages, to metaphysical standing as Terror, a phenomenon which American arms were expected to conquer.

Brzezinski deplores the administration's determination to disconnect the war it had declared from its political and historical sources. He writes that

The US inclination, in the spring of 2002, to embrace even the more extreme forms of Israeli suppression of the Palestinians as part of the struggle against terrorism is a case in point. The unwillingness to recognize a historical connection between the rise of anti-American terrorism and America's involvement in the Middle East makes the formulation of an effective strategic response to terrorism that much more difficult.

Thus, he writes, an initial surge of solidarity with the United States that found expression in Europe and elsewhere just after the attacks waned as the Bush administration revealed its view of the struggle and of the appropriate response:

Culminating in the "axis of evil" formulation, the American perspective on terrorism increasingly came to be viewed as divorced from terrorism's political context. The nearly unanimous global support for America gave way to increasing skepticism regarding the official US formulations of the shared threat.

Combined with the administration's treatment of its supposed allies and its attacks on the United Nations and other international institutions, this skepticism was responsible for the international isolation in which the United States found itself by the time it decided to invade Iraq.

The isolation has yet to be overcome, as the occupation of Iraq goes badly, mechanisms for a transfer of power to a truly autonomous Iraqi government remain controversial and unsettled, and the future of the American occupation and of Iraq itself becomes more confused and more ominous.

2.

Brzezinski considers the central practical problem in international society today a condition of geopolitical instability, located in what he chooses to call the "Global Balkans" (a phrase no doubt meant to enter the reductive vocabulary of current American foreign affairs discussion, alongside "clash of civilizations," "end of history," "Mars vs. Venus," and "old Europe vs. new" —all of them false). The Global Balkans extend from the undoubtedly unstable European Balkan states that emerged from the Serbian-instigated wars of Yugoslav succession (their present instability owing largely to the unresolved issue of Albanian irredentism), through Central Asia and on to Pakistan.

He says that the United States must stabilize and pacify this region so as eventually to cooperatively organize it. In the recent past (as he wrote in the winter issue of *The National Interest*, anticipating his book),

this remote region could have been left to its own devices. Until the middle of the last century, most of it was dominated by imperial and colonial powers. Today, to ignore its problems and underestimate its

potential for global disruption would be tantamount to declaring an open season for intensifying regional violence, region-wide contamination by terrorist groups and the competitive proliferation of weaponry of mass destruction.

Why is this area so dangerous? One might think it is because ex-Soviet Muslim Central Asia seems vulnerable to the same religious radicalism responsible for al-Qaeda. However, Brzezinski demurs on this point, describing as mistaken the American perception that "Islam" possesses or will acquire some kind of meaningful political unity, although he acknowledges that the American reaction to the 2001 terrorist attacks has provoked sentiments of solidarity between Asian Muslims and those of the Middle East, particularly on the Palestine question. "All the talk about 'terrorism with a global reach' cannot erase the national origins of the terrorists, the specific focus of their hatreds, or their religious roots."

The most important contribution to the Islamic mobilization that has occurred since the 1980s was undoubtedly the CIA's recruitment of Muslims to fight the Russians in Afghanistan, and later the Serbs in Bosnia. This helped to radicalize Westernized or partially Westernized young Muslims in the European and American diaspora, as well as Saudi and other Arabian Muslims, around themes of Islamic religious and political revival that have been around since early in the twentieth century.

The notion of revival through the fundamentalist restoration of a golden age is a common and recurrent theme in colonial and postcolonial societies.^[2] It leads nowhere, since it offers no real solution to the contemporary political and cultural problems of Islamic society. As Brzezinski writes, nearly all religious societies "have experienced their versions of fundamentalist sectarianism, but in each case the dominant trend has been in the direction of political pluralism, through a progressive accommodation between the secular and the religious."

Hence, Brzezinski argues, the principal effect of the quasi hysteria about Islamic fundamentalism that has existed in some American circles since the Ayatollah Khomeini appeared on the international scene in 1979 has been to cloud American understanding. It has inspired a belief that the United States can and should "do something" about a familiar cultural phenomenon in socially backward societies.

Why, then, are the Global Balkans a source of danger? Instability and corruption in Russia's contiguous states, including Ukraine and Belarus, and in the Caucasus, Chechnya included, derive from former Russian (and later Soviet) imperial control, and it is not evident that the United States has much that is positive to bring to their situations. Islamic radicalism in the Caucasus, as in ex-Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan, is parasitical upon nationalism, and is reactionary and isolationist in character.

There are rich energy sources in the Caspian region, and Brzezinski notes that "strategic domination over the area, even if cloaked by cooperative arrangements, would be a globally decisive hegemonic asset" (although "vulnerable to Russian or Iranian mischief"). American political intervention in the area was launched under the Clinton administration, although what this will eventually contribute politically to a region largely under Russian domination for the last two centuries remains to be seen: one would think it unlikely to increase stability. The United States is in theory committed to the principles of market economics and free trade, which hold that political domination of an energy producer is less important than the workings of the marketplace in bringing together producers of Caspian oil, who need to sell, with Western consumers who need to buy, a phenomenon demonstrated in 1973 when the OPEC's politically motivated production boycott failed. However, theory does not always prevail in Washington over the seductions of hegemony.

Turkey and Iran are not unstable states, even if both are in institutional ferment. Afghanistan was not inherently unstable before the late 1970s, when a pro-Soviet coup in 1978 was followed by a US-induced Russian intervention in 1979 (and by all that followed).^[3] Afghanistan had previously functioned as an amalgam of ethnic societies, tribally organized, with an agricultural subsistence economy, profiting from its position on ancient and essential Asian trading routes, while disputing with Pakistan the Pathan frontier territories. It currently would seem to possess neither the political nor economic vocation for globalization and market democracy, and the United States and NATO are having no great luck in stabilizing it on such terms.

Until the Afghanistan war, nothing taking place in Central Asia directly or indirectly threatened the United States, which was largely indifferent to the region (and ignorant about it). In ex-Soviet Central Asia one does not deal with progressive and sophisticated national elites of the kind that led the dynamic national movements of the European Balkans in the nineteenth century, disrupting the Ottoman and Hapsburg imperial systems. These are traditionally nomadic societies that have undergone mostly destructive Soviet efforts to modernize them. A critic may question what net advantage will be found in American efforts to "consolidate [their] independence" in a new American-led global system, as Brzezinski has already proposed for the ex-Soviet Caspian Basin states.

3.

Brzezinski has never been a particularly good guide to the future in international politics, but he has been accurate in reflecting the conventional wisdom in each of the recent stages in the evolution of American policy. When he was wrong, nearly everyone else in the policy community was wrong in roughly the same way. Early in his career, in the mid-1950s, he and a colleague had the misfortune of publishing a book arguing the impossibility of change in Soviet-type states.^[4] This was on the eve of the Polish October and the 1956 rising in Hungary.

At the end of the 1960s, when Russia was competing strongly with the US in its space programs, and it was common to think the Soviet Union a scientific and technological superpower, he published another work which said that the Soviet Union and the United States were evolving along converging lines toward a new form of "technetronic" superstate in which their science and advanced industry would leave everyone else far behind, including Western Europe and Japan.^[5]

We know now that the gap between Soviet and Western industry was already enormous, and had been steadily widening since the 1950s. Western Europe was in the middle of what the French called *Les Trente Glorieuses*— the three postwar boom decades that produced rapid growth and enormous progress in Western Europe's industrial and living standards.

Brzezinski had plenty of company in his errors, but one must ask if he is any more reliable today when he says that

America's power is unprecedented in its global military reach, in the centrality of America's economic vitality for the well-being of the world economy, in the innovative impact of America's technological dynamism, and in the worldwide appeal of the multifaceted and often crass American mass culture.

In fact, available American ground power is currently tied up in Iraq and Afghanistan, without assuring stability in either place, and US naval and air power are all but irrelevant to Washington's frustrations. American economic vitality currently depends on Asian willingness to finance US deficits.

He says that Western Europe lacks the unity to act politically and that "Japan, once seen as the next superstate, is out of the race." China, despite its economic progress, faces political uncertainties, and in any case will remain a relatively poor country for years to come. "Russia is no longer in the running." He continues:

The argument that American power is uniquely central to world peace is supported by a simple hypothetical test: What would happen if the US Congress were to mandate the prompt retraction of US military power from its three crucial foreign deployments—Europe, the Far East, and the Persian Gulf?

He answers by saying that the world would "plunge...almost immediately into a politically chaotic crisis." The result in Europe (which "cannot be secure without America,...cannot unite against America, and cannot significantly influence America without being willing to act jointly with America") would be a "pell-mell rush by some to rearm but also to reach a special arrangement with Russia." Europe would again become "vulnerable to internal rivalries and external threats...." The entire European political architecture would be endangered. "Traditional fears of German power and historically rooted national animosities would be quickly rekindled."

"In the Far East, war would probably break out on the Korean Peninsula while Japan would undertake a crash program of rearmament, including nuclear weapons. In the Persian Gulf area, Iran would become dominant and would intimidate the adjoining Arab states."

This is quite a barrage of alarming predictions. Are they convincing? Certainly an abrupt renunciation of the United States' commitment to the defense of NATO alliance members in Eastern Europe (and prospective members bordering Russia) would cause dismay because it would be interpreted as an American invitation to Russian political or territorial demands on neighboring states. But surely this is not what Brzezinski is talking about.

Otherwise, why should fifty years of European unification and peace collapse "pell-mell" because the United States decided on the "retraction" of its forces from Europe? Washington already has announced its intention to withdraw troops from the Balkans, the only place where they currently are an important stabilizing presence.

The US also intends to reduce the size and number of its bases in Germany and elsewhere in "old" Europe, and the Europeans who seem most alarmed are the shopkeepers and local businesses serving American bases. Brzezinski also surely knows, as does Donald Rumsfeld (whatever his threats last year to the Germans), that the United States is not going to shut its Western European bases or quit NATO for a very long time, unless forced to do so, since these bases, which today have little relevance to the security of Western Europeans, are essential to the United States.

They are indispensable to American strategic operations throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. NATO membership allows the United States to claim a political influence in European affairs. Washington insists that NATO is the model and potential basis for a consolidation of US–EU relations under overall American leadership. Without NATO, the United States, strictly speaking, has no more right to bases and troops in Europe than Germany or France has a right to station forces and possess military bases in the United States.

Brzezinski's threat of a "prompt retraction" of US military forces from Europe might even be greeted with relief in some countries, which face no foreign military threat and where the bases have increasingly become political embarrassments. US foreign policy (even before the war on terror) had lost much popular sympathy in Western European opinion, which was on the whole very strongly opposed, even in Spain, to last year's US intervention in Iraq. I am not aware of any serious Western European observer who would ascribe to US troop departures the drastic consequences Brzezinski describes. The withdrawal would cause much controversy and a number of short-term practical problems; but it would eventually bring a relaxation of existing tensions and—in my view—long-term improvement in the relations of the US and the EU.

As for a European rush to rearm: rearm against whom? Europe's resistance to persistent US pressures to increase military spending and buy new military equipment is not the result of European pacifism (or "cowardice" as some neoconservatives like to say). Rather, the Europeans have little enthusiasm for playing an expensive role as US military auxiliaries in undertakings that serve US rather than European foreign policy conceptions and interests.

Today's Western Europe needs (and generally has) military forces that would allow it to deal with renewed trouble in the Balkans, conduct peacemaking interventions of the kind Britain recently carried out in Sierra Leone, France in the Ivory Coast and the Congo, and Italy in Albania (when post-Communist Albania was falling under Mafia domination). Beyond that, the European governments need to control their air space and coasts; and they wish to maintain basic professional military organizations, skills and assets that could be rapidly expanded in some (currently hard to imagine) military emergency.

So far as the war against terrorism is concerned, Europe's police and intelligence services have been conducting it very successfully, to American as well as European advantage. NATO now has six thousand soldiers or paramilitary police in Afghanistan, but nothing most Europeans have seen there or in Iraq inspires them to think that joining in new military interventions elsewhere in the Middle East or Asia will improve matters.

In Asia too, an argument can be made that withdrawing American troops and bases would in the long term have a constructive effect on America's relations with the nations where they now are stationed, and where they provoke political tension. US troops in South Korea surely are today more significant as North Korea's hostages than as guarantors of peace. In Japan, American forces are a political irritant, and while they spare Japan the inconvenience of having a foreign policy, that is not a condition that can be expected to last indefinitely, as China develops a more active policy, although an essentially defensive one (following its millennial traditions).

There is a fundamental issue here. Brzezinski identifies the United States as a "world-transforming society, even revolutionary in its subversive impact on sovereignty-based international politics." At the same time he argues that worldwide American activism and even military intervention are essential to its role as "the linchpin of global stability." The contradiction seems obvious.

It would be hard to argue that American activism has been a stabilizing influence in Latin America from the 1950s; in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s; in Afghanistan in the 1970s; or in Iran from before the Shah's ouster to the present day. Washington's tacit support for Israel's settlement of the Palestinian territories has been the opposite of stabilizing.

One can make a parallel comment about the Clinton administration's drive to globalize world investment and trade by breaking down existing economic and regulatory structures, substituting export-dependent production for subsistence agriculture and artisanal industry in non-Western countries. The effect has been to undermine established social structures and encourage urbanization and cultural Westernization. It also has had some positive consequences, notably for Western investors, on whose behalf the policy was adopted, as well as on economic growth in a number of countries, at considerable (and now acknowledged) social costs. It has also been a deeply destabilizing force in many other parts of the non-Western world.

4.

Brzezinski's book is a disappointing work in that its assumptions about the nature of contemporary international relations, and about the demands and ultimate objectives of American foreign policy, do not fundamentally challenge those of the Bush administration and those who support its general approach. A recent and comprehensive survey of American opinion, conducted by Notre Europe, a studies and research group headed by Jacques Delors and supported in part by the European Commission, concludes that the 2001 attacks were a "clarifying moment" in American opinion, producing a perceptible "long-term convergence of views amongst the American foreign policy elite...based on the strategies of preemption and democratic enlargement...on both sides of the political divide."^[6]

Brzezinski observes that the security the United States formerly found in geographical isolation and in alliance with Western Europe now is gone. New circumstances and technologies are responsible for new forms of insecurity. He contends that the United States is "fated to be the catalyst either for a global community or for global chaos, [hence] Americans have the unique historical responsibility to determine which of the two will come to pass."

If the US tries to dominate the world, he writes, we risk a destructive isolation of the United States from international society, and disorder abroad. If we choose "leadership," we can promote "the progressive emergence of a global community of increasingly shared interest with America at its center." His view nonetheless assumes that international society's inevitable development is toward political and economic institutions (and values) that today have their most advanced expression in American political society and the American version of market capitalism.

If, however, an American government refuses the responsibility of working to advance this outcome, this

could plunge the world into escalating anarchy, made all the more ominous by the dissemination of weaponry of mass destruction.

A central question concerning the current presidential campaign is whether John Kerry, and if he should succeed, a new Democratic administration, would not only break with

the Bush policy of preemption and intervention to "impose democracy" through regime change but might reexamine the essentially hegemonic ambition that underlies that policy.

Brzezinski condemns the domineering Bush method, which, as he says, "eventually mobilizes countervailing opposition." To him, the task is "to progressively transform America's prevailing power into a co-optive hegemony—one in which leadership is exercised more through shared conviction with enduring allies than by assertive domination." He is aware of the backlash against American power; hence his emphasis on converting clients to consensual allies. However he maintains that "the acceptance of American leadership by others is the sine qua non for avoiding chaos." This strikes me as Bush policy given a human face.

A different formulation of national policy might note that while international relationships are never simple, and power is an essential ingredient in them, justice as well as peace usually profits from a realistic acceptance of multiple (if unequal) national power centers, and of the inevitability of conflicting interests and values. The search for consensual American global hegemony, as for the "defeat" of terrorism and "victory" over evil, is a naive simulacrum of the serious armed utopianisms that were the curse of the twentieth century. One might even consider, as Kennan dared to do in 1951, as the cold war intensified, that national quality and success is ultimately determined by a nation's "spiritual distinction"—not a measure often cited in foreign policy discussions.

The ultimate criticism to be made of the position Brzezinski shares with many other foreign policy experts is that it ignores or denies the importance of what historically has been the principal force in international relations—the competitive assertion of national interests, founded on divergent values and ambitions among nations, assuredly including democratic ones.

His argument presumes that such differences will find resolution in some version of an end of history, achieved through convergence with the United States. Brzezinski and those who share his views would seem to believe in what has been called the Whig interpretation of history: that history's purpose has been to lead up to us. The pursuit of national interest by other states produces the "global chaos" against which he warns. Condoleezza Rice made the identical argument, as in a speech last year to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, saying that policies based on balance of power are the road to war.

This position rejects both the classical Western view of history, which is not progressive, and the realist school of political philosophy dominant in past Western political thought, which traditionally has taken a disabused view of human nature and political possibility. The progressive view is a manifestation of hope, or of faith. It amounts to an ideology, teleological in nature. It denies the proposition that hegemony produces hubris, inviting the attention of Nemesis, ending in destitution.

The notion that the United States has an exemplary national mission has always been central to American political thought and rhetoric. In Woodrow Wilson's view (and that of many in the US today) this mission was divine in origin. Wilson (a president respected by today's notably secular neoconservatives) held that the hand of God "has led us in this way," and that we are the mortal instruments of His will—a view that has repeatedly found an echo in the discourse of George W. Bush. This sense of mission lies behind the American claim to an exceptional role in international society.

Brzezinski argues that the practical consequence today of America's

global security role and its extraordinary global ubiquity [is to give the United States] the right to seek more security than other countries. It needs forces with a decisive worldwide deployment capability. It must enhance its intelligence (rather than waste resources on a huge homeland security bureaucracy) so that threats to America can be forestalled. It must maintain a comprehensive technological edge over all potential rivals.... But it should also define its security in ways that help mobilize the self-interest of others. That comprehensive task can be pursued more effectively if the world understands that the trajectory of America's grand strategy is toward a global community of shared interest.

This belief that the United States has a unique historical mission—whether or not divinely commissioned—is not open to logical refutation. But an American policy that rests on a self-indulgent fiction must be expected to come to a bad end.

Every country has a "story" it tells itself about its place in the contemporary world. We are familiar enough with the American story, beginning with the City on a Hill and progressing through Manifest Destiny toward Woodrow Wilson's conviction we are "to show the way to the nations of the world how they shall walk in the paths of liberty.... It was of this that we dreamed at our birth." The current version of the story says that this exalted destiny is fatefully challenged by rogue nations with nuclear weapons, failed states, and the menace of Islamic extremists. Something close to Huntington's war of civilizations has begun. National mobilization has already taken place. Years of struggle lie ahead.^[7]

The "isolation" of the United States today is caused by the fact that its claims about the threat of terrorism seem to others grossly exaggerated, and its reaction, as Brzezinski himself argues, dangerously disproportionate. Most advanced societies have already had, or have, their wars with "terrorism": the British with the IRA, the Spanish with the Basque separatist ETA, the Germans, Italians, and Japanese with their Red Brigades, the French with Palestinian and Algerian terrorists, Greeks, Latin Americans, and Asians with their own varieties of extremists.

America's principal allies no longer believe its national "story." They have tried to believe in it, and have been courteous about it even while skepticism grew. They are alarmed about what has happened to the United States under the Bush administration, and see no good coming from it. They are struck by how impervious Americans seem to be to the notion that our September 11 was not the defining event of the age, after which "nothing could be the same." They are inclined to think that the international condition, like the human condition, is in fact very much the same as it has always been. It is the United States that has changed. They are disturbed that American leaders seem unable to understand this.

When American officials and policy experts come to Europe saying that "everything has changed," warning that allied governments must "do something" about the anti-Americanism displayed last year in connection with the Iraq invasion, the Western European reaction is often to marvel at the Americans' inability to appreciate that the source of the problem lies in how the United States has conducted itself since September 2001. They find this changed United States rather menacing. An Irish international banker recently observed to me that when Europeans suggest to visiting Americans that things have changed in Europe too, as a direct result of America's policies, "it's as if the Americans can't hear." A French writer has put it this way: it has been like discovering that a respected, even beloved, uncle has slipped into schizophrenia. When you visit him, his words no longer connect with the reality around him. It seems futile to talk about it with him. The family, embarrassed, is even reluctant to talk about it among themselves.

—March 10, 2004

Notes

[1] Richard Ullman, "The US and the World: An Interview with George Kennan," *The New York Review*, August 12, 1999.

[2] See Edmund Stillman and William Pfaff, *The Politics of Hysteria: the Sources of Twentieth-Century Conflict* (Harper and Row, 1964).

[3] For which Mr. Brzezinski himself (at the time national security adviser to President Carter) has claimed responsibility, in an interview with the Paris weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur* (January 15–21, 1998). "The reality, secretly guarded until now, [is that] it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.... We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would."

This imposes a reflection on moral responsibility. An American initiative, made with the intention of weakening the Soviet Union, provoked Soviet intervention into what had been an internal coup in Afghanistan, and the US then armed Afghan resistance to the invaders. This resistance liberated Afghanistan, and also contributed to the "liberation" of the US from the Soviet threat, as it was meant to do. However, it should also be said that

the Taliban came to power in the confusion and conflict following a war in whose origins the US was implicated and during which the US contributed to the development of the Taliban movement.

^[4] Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Harvard University Press, 1956).

^[5] Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era* (Viking, 1970).^[1]

^[6] Timo Behr, "US Attitudes Towards Europe: A Shift of Paradigms?," *Research and European Issues*, No. 29 (November 2003).

^[7] There is speculation in some military circles that an attack on the US by terrorists using weapons of mass destruction might one day make military government necessary in the US. See General Tommy Franks, in an interview in (of all places) the lifestyle magazine *Cigar Aficionado*, as circulated last November 21 by the conservative Web news service Newsmax.com.

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