

SOVEREIGNTY'S LAST BEST CHANCE

WHEN IT COMES TO THREATS to global security, there has been no shortage of wake-up calls. Transnational criminals illegally traffic sophisticated nuclear technology to unstable regimes in the most conflict-prone regions of the world. Terrorist groups that seek to inflict mass casualties are found with training materials on using biological weapons. Sea levels rise, droughts last longer and longer, and storms are more frequent. Skyrocketing energy prices lead to astronomical rises in food costs, prompting riots and warnings of food emergencies in poor countries. Economic turbulence and insecurity drain savings and jobs in large parts of the world. Deadly viruses cross borders, continents, and species.

This is the world of transnational threats, where the actions—or inaction—of people and governments anywhere in the world can harm others thousands of miles away. It is a world where national security is interdependent with global security and where sovereign states acting alone are incapable of protecting their citizens. It is a world for which we are woefully unprepared.

It is also a world in which American leadership has been shallow and sometimes misguided, but is greatly needed. It is a world where major and rising powers must agree to cooperate through strong international institutions and embrace new standards of responsibility for all states, so that their peoples can be safe and prosper. This book proposes how.

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND GLOBAL SECURITY

A profound but underappreciated truth about globalization is the extent to which national security and international security have become inseparably linked. This is true even in the most powerful countries. In the United States, for example, most Americans would agree on a short list of threats to their national security: transnational terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, a pandemic of a new deadly disease, global warming, and economic instability and crisis. What stands out is that these threats can affect every country's security.

Nor do the threats that preoccupy other parts of the world stand in isolation. Poverty, civil wars, and regional conflicts are all connected to what threatens the United States. Transnational terrorism uses ungovernable spaces for sanctuary and to gather recruits, capital, and weapons, and it uses a narrative of grievance stoked by protracted civil and regional conflicts. Climate change exacerbates competition for land and water and places greater burdens on the poor. Poverty not only increases the risks of civil war and state failure but also precipitates the emergence of deadly infectious diseases.

The interconnectedness of these threats and their cumulative effect pose grave dangers to the ability of states to protect their sovereignty. For many states the domestic burdens of poverty, civil war, disease, and environmental degradation point in one direction: toward partnerships and agreements with international institutions. Entering agreements or accepting assistance does not weaken sovereignty; it preserves it.¹ Even stronger states, to preserve sovereignty, must enter into agreements to counter transnational threats such as deadly infectious disease and nuclear proliferation that cannot be overcome in the absence of sustained international cooperation.

U.S. foreign policy has yet to come to grips with the implications of security interdependence. Especially in the last seven years, Washington has elevated one threat—transnational terrorism—above global warming, poverty, deadly disease, and other dangers, neglecting to notice that terrorism is the least salient threat to many states and that most of these threats affect each other. The United States has not seen the wisdom of placing threats to its security in a global framework. And that neglect has

cost it much in the way of international cooperation. The reality of a world of interconnected and transnational threats is a simple one: you have to cooperate with others to get them to cooperate with you.

THE POST-COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL VOID

Writing in 2008, we are seventeen years into the post-cold war era and seven years into the post-9/11 era, and some pundits now advocate the need for a “post-post-9/11 foreign policy,” without much indication of what that might be. All of which is to say that we live in a foreign policy void, bereft of vision. We understand that the world has changed, but our institutions, policies, and leaders have not fully comprehended how profound that change has been.

Our international institutions to promote cooperation for peace and prosperity were all designed in a different era of different threats and different power relations. This does not mean they are obsolete. Some have shown remarkable resiliency, while others have adapted in rather ad hoc fashion to changing realities. It is better that we have them than not, but they are inadequate to produce the capacity and collective action to address predictably today's new threats. Similarly, new international norms have emerged, but these have been of the “what should be done” as opposed to the “what will be done” variety. As a result, international order is now frayed; we have commitments without compliance and resolutions without resolve. We lack predictability and confidence in international responses to today's challenges.

International order requires a source of power, and since the Second World War, the United States has been that source. The United States led in the creation of international security and financial institutions, and when those institutions work effectively, they help meet America's security interests as well as those of its friends and allies, and indeed those of all but the most recalcitrant states.

For much of the second half of the twentieth century, key allies of the United States and many of their citizens regarded the United States as a vital provider of international order. That belief has vanished. Fewer people around the world accept or trust American power—or regard it as legitimate. International public opinion polls over the last several years

show that many people believe that U.S. foreign policy has made the world a more dangerous place since 2001.²

The 2003 invasion of Iraq casts a long shadow on America's standing in the world and its relations with friends and competitors alike. But it would be wrong to trace all of America's difficulties to the decision to go to war or its conduct of the war. Rather, America's standing in the world today reflects a fifteen-year failure to create the rules and institutions of international order.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, American military strength was unrivaled. Democracy and liberal capitalism, the ideological alternatives to communism, were triumphant. America's economic wealth and power were ascendant. Both U.S. presidents since 1992, William J. Clinton and George W. Bush, had historical opportunities to reinvigorate international cooperation and put in place new international institutions, rules, and understandings appropriate for today's world.

The end of the cold war was a moment akin to the end of other great-power wars, a time ripe for making sweeping international changes to refashion international order. The Clinton administration in the 1990s understandably believed that the U.S. challenge at hand was to incorporate Russia and Central and Eastern Europe into a democratic community—and beyond that to fashion post-cold war diplomacy into a driver of global peace and prosperity. They expanded NATO and sought to anchor Russia, and later in the 1990s, China, into international financial institutions. They worked hard to address the effects of the Soviet breakup on nuclear proliferation, instituting new programs to deal with loose nukes, working with new governments in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to give up nuclear missiles on their territory.

Beyond the challenge of cold war reconstruction, there was the need to bring cohesion to an increasingly diverse world, characterized by more actors that could disrupt, fewer actors that could control, and greater opportunity in global markets, yet greater risk in the movement of pollution, disease, and weapons across borders. The Clinton administration concluded international negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, global warming, an international criminal court, and a new World Trade Organization.

But the Clinton administration, by its own admission, never formulated a global vision of order, and it was largely silent on how the rest of

the world would fit into a peaceful, democratic community.³ Like many other governments, it dimly understood that the challenge of international order was changing dramatically. In a remarkably prescient article published in 1992, James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul described a world that was rapidly splitting in two: a largely peaceful democratic and liberal core, where Kant triumphed over Hobbes, and a violent periphery of weak, fragile states, corrupt and feeble markets, and ideologies hostile to liberal ideas.⁴ Analysts like Robert Kaplan and John Steinbruner observed that if the security issues of the periphery could not be contained, they would corrode the order and predictability necessary for prosperity and peace.⁵

Despite its larger support for international institutions and partnerships, the Clinton administration frequently derided the one international institution with operational responsibility for failed states: the United Nations. The Clinton administration blamed the organization for failure in Somalia, which entrenched anti-UN sentiment in Congress, and in the immediate aftermath of the Somalia debacle, it supported the withdrawal of peacekeepers during the genocide in Rwanda. In Iraq, the administration's early cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) deteriorated into what one analyst described as "creeping unilateralism," in which the Clinton administration took upon itself the right to decide how UN Security Council resolutions would be implemented.⁶ It was the Clinton administration, in 1998, that declared regime change as the U.S. goal in Iraq.⁷

The U.S. failure to strengthen the United Nations and address the security issues of the periphery—poverty, weak states, civil war, and regional instability—made the world a more dangerous place over the last fifteen years. And those security issues erupted on September 11, 2001, when terrorists based in one of the world's poorest, most violence-torn regions carried out the most deadly attack on U.S. territory in history.

The 9/11 attacks changed American views about security. The Bush administration began to understand that failed states and ungoverned space in the international system were resources for transnational terrorism and organized crime. But whereas 9/11 changed threat assessments, it powerfully reinforced the administration's unilateral tendencies.

It is easy to forget the outpouring of international empathy, concern, and friendship for the United States after the September attacks, and the

many offers of assistance. The battle against transnational terrorism, shared with China, India, and Europe, presaged the possibility of extensive cooperation among these powers. American policy and leadership at that moment could have transformed international order.

Instead, all the goodwill became a second wasted opportunity. The United States shut out its NATO allies from Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, only to realize by the summer of 2002 that it needed them. Instead of focusing on defeating al Qaeda and its Taliban supporters in Afghanistan, the Bush administration declared a global war on terror—with no boundaries and no finite end—that alienated allies and potential collaborators in the Arab world and beyond. Its willful, driven pursuit of war in Iraq poisoned international cooperation.⁸ Coupled with a new national security doctrine that embraced preventive war, along with casual references to forcible regime change as its preferred method of dealing with rogue states, the United States set itself up as self-appointed sheriff and judge of the international system.

The global war on terror squandered one of the United States' great assets: its reputation for protecting and promoting human rights and the rule of law. Guantánamo, Abu Ghraib, torture, and rendition destroyed U.S. credibility on human rights in large parts of the world, especially in Muslim-populated countries.

Like the end of the cold war, 9/11 was a potentially transformative moment. Leaders could have rebuilt international cooperation to last deep into the twenty-first century. Unlike President Clinton, who strove toward a stronger international order, but did not have the vision and strategy to reach it, President Bush did not even try.

Historically it has taken war or crisis to bring about a fundamental transformation of international order. The failure to seize the opportunities afforded by the end of the cold war and 9/11 creates a much more difficult challenge: to use the urgency of looming existential security challenges to prompt global action before their worst consequences are felt.

RESPONSIBLE SOVEREIGNTY

Rebuilding international order will require focusing on specific institutions for addressing specific threats—and making them effective. But as

a prerequisite it also requires a vision, a foundational principle that gives a moral value to order and brings coherence to expectations about how states should act across multiple issue areas. Such a principle must appeal to diverse populations in every region of the world, win the support of key states, and resonate with America's self-image.

We believe that responsible sovereignty, or the injunction that sovereignty entails obligations and duties to one's own citizens and to other sovereign states, is such a principle. Responsible sovereignty differs from the traditional interpretation of sovereignty (sometimes called *Westphalian sovereignty*) as noninterference in the internal affairs of states. As initially articulated by African statesman and scholar Francis Deng in the 1990s, responsible sovereignty meant "that national governments are duty bound to ensure minimum standards of security and social welfare for their citizens and be accountable both to the national body public and the international community."⁹

In this book we refine and extend the concept and apply it to diverse transnational threats to formulate solutions. We argue that responsible sovereignty requires all states to be accountable for their actions that have impacts beyond their borders, and makes such reciprocity a core principle in restoring international order and for providing for the welfare of one's own citizens. In a world of interdependent security, states cannot exercise their responsibility to their own citizens without also exercising it in concert with other states. Responsible sovereignty also implies a positive obligation on the part of powerful states to provide weaker states with the capacity to exercise their sovereignty responsibly—a "responsibility to build."

Why an order based on responsible sovereignty? We emphasize *sovereignty* because states are still the primary units of the international system. As much as globalization has diminished the power of states, and as much as sovereignty has been used as a shield to protect governments from accountability for their behavior, it is hard to think of any major international problem that can be addressed without responsible, capable states. States create incentives and disincentives for social and economic actors, from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to businesses, within their borders. And we know from example the horrific consequences for citizens of states that fail. Sovereignty also reaffirms states as the central decisionmakers in international cooperation. As a

former head of state told us, "International cooperation depends first and foremost on decisions taken by governments to cooperate."

Sovereignty's moral justification over the centuries is that it helps to produce international order—the regular, patterned behavior of states that reduces violence, ensures that commitments are kept, and enforces stable property rights.¹⁰ Sovereignty, the external recognition of governmental authority over a territory, provides the legal autonomy of governments to choose the international agreements they will enter into and the policies they will pursue to protect and provide for their citizens.

Traditional sovereignty, and its emphasis on noninterference in domestic affairs, developed as a norm because in a world of vastly unequal powers and never-ending interventions in the affairs of other states, it was the best generator of order, reciprocity, and predictability among states. It also protected weaker states from the predation of stronger states. Sovereignty had its costs, but its benefit was international order.

We emphasize *responsibility* because in a transnational world, traditional sovereignty has failed to produce order and in important cases has actually undermined it. When he first introduced the concept of sovereignty as responsibility in 1993,¹¹ Deng felt that traditional sovereignty had failed his continent. Waves of humanitarian emergencies in the 1980s and early 1990s met indifference among some African states as millions of their citizens died. Traditional sovereignty posed a constraint on international access to the victims of famine and civil war.

Deng's work focused on the gap between the juridical sovereignty of Africa's postcolonial states, based on external recognition, and the empirical sovereignty of those states: the legitimate monopoly over the use of coercion, the ability to extract resources and use them for development, the provision of security to citizens, and the promotion of their human dignity. Too many states in Africa, according to Deng, hid behind juridical sovereignty to mask their failures in achieving empirical sovereignty. The result was civil wars that spilled over borders, producing regional insecurity. In short, disorder within states became disorder across states. For Deng, when states manifestly failed to provide for the basic survival needs of their population, powerful, capable states had an obligation to help the victims.

Deng's work was pathbreaking in two ways. First, it transformed expectations about sovereignty and the obligations of states in Africa. As

late as 1990, one scholar, Robert Jackson, asserted that the international regime of quasi-states—the name he gave to the tens of juridical, but ineffective, states—was unlikely to change because of a powerful taboo that operates “silently as a form of self-censorship by virtually all agents and representatives of states and international organizations and adds decisive normative sanction to the traditional reluctance of diplomats to engage in public criticism of each other’s domestic affairs.”¹² Deng’s work breached that taboo. Prominent African leaders like Olusegun Obasanjo and Salim Salim took up the concept in the 1990s and pursued a Conference on Security, Stability, and Development Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), inspired by the Helsinki process in Europe in the 1970s. The vision and ideas negotiated in the CSSDCA helped shape the far-sighted charter of the African Union and its Peace and Security Council, adopted in 2002.¹³

Second, Deng’s work helped redefine sovereignty away from then-current interpretations based on strict noninterference in the domestic affairs of states. His emphasis on the responsibility of others to protect the citizens of failed states was picked up in 2001 by an international panel led by Gareth Evans and Mahmoud Sahnoun. That panel coined the term “responsibility to protect”—the injunction that although states have primary responsibility for protecting their citizens from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and mass atrocities, the international community has a responsibility to intervene if a state is unable or unwilling to do so.¹⁴ In 2004, a group of eminent individuals, the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, supported the principle.¹⁵ In 2005, the African Group at the United Nations, led by Rwanda and South Africa, fought a tough battle to win General Assembly endorsement of the principle.

The universal endorsement of the responsibility to protect by all UN member states was, in some ways, the clearest evidence of a sea change in the understanding of sovereignty. This shift has taken place in a remarkably short amount of time. As recently as 1999, then Secretary General Kofi Annan addressed the General Assembly and spoke of the need for acceptance of humanitarian intervention to address genocide and ethnic cleansing, only to be sharply criticized by many members of the G-77 developing countries and the Nonaligned Movement. Merely six years later, the General Assembly accepted that sovereignty was not sacrosanct, that it imposed positive obligations on states in their treat-

ment of their own citizens and in their response to genocide and crimes against humanity.

The moment brought the United Nations closer to shifts in understanding of sovereignty emerging in different regions of the world, enshrined in the constitutive acts of regional organizations such as the African Union, the Organization of American States, and the European Union. That moment also brought the General Assembly's interpretation of sovereignty closer to UN practice since the end of the cold war. During the cold war, the United Nations and regional organizations seldom sought to prevent or mediate civil violence within states. Failing states insisted that diplomacy aimed at managing internal violence violated their sovereignty and degraded their legitimacy by treating the state and rebels as equals. Now, when civil wars break out, it is normal and expected that outsiders attempt to mediate an end to violence.

Similarly, during the cold war UN peacekeepers were mostly used in interstate disputes. It was barely conceivable that states would deign to admit neutral international soldiers to their territory during civil war. Today, the overwhelming bulk of peacekeepers are deployed to resolve internal violence. Such interventions are justified not only because they save lives; they are carried out to create states that are *capable* of exercising their sovereignty. The result has been a 40 percent reduction in civil wars between 1993 and 2005, one of the most dramatic declines in numbers of civil wars in the past 200 years.¹⁶

The challenges to traditional sovereignty have grown more acute since the end of the cold war. In many parts of the world, the state is weak and overwhelmed by a host of transnational threats. Technological and economic developments have further eroded the ability of states to control borders and populations. The interdependence of national and international security further requires the interpretation of sovereignty we propose here. For example, to protect its citizens against the ravages of climate change, a state must exercise its sovereignty to enter into cooperative agreements with other states to constrain carbon emissions.

An emphasis on responsible sovereignty helps address a problem pointed out by many scholars of international cooperation: In a world of self-interested states, who is concerned with the medium to long term?¹⁷ How does one create what those scholars refer to as “the shadow of the future,” the sense that our interactions will continue long

into the future and require consideration in what we do now?¹⁸ Responsible sovereignty introduces medium- to long-term considerations into calculations of narrow state interest and places issues of trust and reputation at center stage.

By putting responsible sovereignty at the heart of international order, we seek to calibrate the content of sovereignty with the challenges of order in a radically different international environment. In some ways this is nothing new: sovereignty's content has varied throughout history, and its rules for recognition and intervention have changed over time.¹⁹ Traditionally, renegotiation of sovereignty has been the purview of great powers, which at times of seismic shifts in global politics perceive new threats to the stability of the international system and attempt to alter sovereignty to meet those new threats. The challenge in today's globalized world is to open up the process beyond a few great powers.

Such a renegotiation is long overdue. The last global attempt to define the content of sovereignty was the creation of the United Nations in 1945. Its creators enshrined nonintervention. Simultaneously, they affirmed self-determination for nations going through decolonization, and they introduced universal human rights to guide the internal practice of sovereignty. The irony is that these rules, thought to be complementary in the UN Charter, have been anything but. On one hand, many people look to the United Nations as an embodiment of an international commitment to universal rights, which can be seen as eroding sovereignty. On the other hand, the United Nations has been a strong defender of the sovereignty of deadly states. Still, a consensus is growing: global security will decrease unless a way can be found to encourage more responsibility in the internal and external policies of states.

What we propose here is on one level deeply conservative: we seek to strengthen and enhance sovereignty, not eliminate it, as a linchpin of international order. On another level, what we propose here is transformative: it insists that in the twenty-first century, sovereignty can be preserved only through its responsible exercise. Maximalist interpretations of sovereignty—states can do as they damned well please—will endanger the essence of sovereignty: the freedom to decide on how best to protect one's citizens and promote their well-being and dignity. State failure will be more frequent in the face of climate-induced hardship and conflict, pandemics of infectious disease, and assaults by nonstate actors. Pursued

to its natural end, maximalist sovereignty will gradually and inevitably constrict the freedom of states, even the strongest and richest, to determine their own policies.

WHO DEFINES RESPONSIBILITY?

A vision of international order based on responsible sovereignty will prompt predictable criticisms from all sides. International audiences will assert that this is an American attempt to circumscribe traditional sovereignty, that it is about the powerful dictating standards of behavior for small, weak states, and that it will be a one-sided determination of what it means to be responsible. Americans will want to know if others will dictate what it means for the United States to be responsible, whether the order we suggest will respect American institutions and ideals, whether it will provide greater security and prosperity than a world in which the United States maintains maximum freedom of action—and indeed whether the United States will somehow be constrained in its ability to protect itself.

The compelling answer to these concerns is that the rules of this new order must be negotiated, not imposed. Gone are the days when the largest powers could simply dictate the rules of international engagement; and the idea that international institutions can impose rules on states is a myth, not a reality.

Throughout this book we apply the principle of responsible sovereignty to key global issues—nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, counterterrorism, global warming, biological security, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and economic prosperity—but always derive those standards of responsibility from existing international treaties, conventions, and forums to which the United States and others have agreed. Where we encounter new international challenges that demand new commitments, we suggest directions for extending responsibility, but insist that its content must be negotiated.

Sovereign states must remain the fundamental unit of a viable international system. Yet each state must recognize that the only way to protect those within its borders is to take responsibility for national actions that have impacts beyond borders. In effect, we must recognize today's reality: we *do* affect one another, and by reaching agreement on how we

should affect one another, we stand in the best position to protect ourselves and create an environment that fosters security for all.

Some will argue that democracy, not responsible sovereignty, should be the bedrock of international order. As we make clear in the book, democracy and human rights have a central role in an international system based on responsible sovereignty. Most fundamentally, these values are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a founding document of the United Nations. Moreover, responsible sovereignty emphasizes the obligations of states toward their citizens, and by making human dignity a core value to be promoted, it has the promise of creating a world in which individuals can reach their human potential, and, in the words of the UN Charter, live their lives “in larger freedom.”

A foreign policy driven by responsible sovereignty, however, departs from a foreign policy driven by democracy promotion in two respects. The first is that it acknowledges that nondemocracies influence international order as much as democracies. Democratic states need the cooperation of, and must engage, nondemocratic states, whether it be to halt global warming, stop an outbreak of deadly infectious disease, or prevent catastrophic terrorism. Exclusion is not the answer. The second, as we elaborate further in chapter 9, is that a foreign policy driven by responsible sovereignty insists that democracy must be achieved from within and cannot be imposed. This does not preclude democracy promotion, but it does insist that it is done with prudence and a better understanding of the limits of what outsiders can accomplish.

THE ARGUMENT

International order in an age of transnational threats requires power in the service of responsibility. Major powers must be convinced to exercise their sovereignty responsibly, and weak states must become capable of exercising their sovereignty responsibly. Building this order depends on four prerequisites: effective international leadership by the United States; institutionalized cooperation between the United States and the major and rising powers; negotiated understandings of the applicability of responsible sovereignty to different issues; and effective institutions that provide legitimacy, mobilize resources, and coordinate multiple actors toward common goals.

Part I of the book, the opening three chapters, addresses the role of power in creating an international order based on responsible sovereignty. In chapter 2 we make a case for why an order based on responsible sovereignty is in the interest of the United States and other powers.

The United States needs strong international institutions to combat threats to its citizenry, including climate change, nuclear proliferation, deadly infectious disease, and catastrophic terrorism. It needs strong partners to wield influence with actors such as North Korea and Iran, and to share the burden of complex challenges. It is in America's self-interest to act now while its influence is strong, to model leadership for the twenty-first century based on the premise of partnership and recognition of interdependence.

Internationally, policymakers must recognize that there is no prospect for international order in the next twenty years that does not rely on U.S. power and leadership. The United States has the world's largest economy, the strongest military, and the broadest alliances. The world needs the United States to use its leadership and resources for the resolution of transnational threats. If the United States blocks international solutions on issues such as climate change, nuclear security, and financial stability, sustainable global outcomes are unachievable. The United States has veto power across key international institutions; without its acquiescence, major reforms are unattainable.

In chapter 3 we introduce the single most important innovation for the order we propose: an institution to foster dynamic, cooperative interaction among the United States, other major powers, and the rising powers—who together must lead in forging effective solutions to transnational threats. To this end we call for the creation of a G-16—the smallest (and therefore most efficient) number of states that includes all the major and rising powers and key regional states.²⁰ This would not be an expansion of the G-8, but a new body that will build consensus among the leading powers on transnational threats and challenges; forge networks between policymakers in these states and key international institutions; and prenegotiate agreements before seeking broader international endorsement and legitimation of them. In addition to elaborating on the functions and design of the G-16, we examine the central role the United Nations plays in peace and security, and we describe how to strengthen its core functions, widen its scope on transnational threats, and revitalize its

management. We highlight the role that regional organizations can play in strengthening international order and indicate how they can be bolstered, or where they do not currently exist, how they can be created.

In part II of the book, chapters 4 through 9, we show how responsible sovereignty and the support of the United States and other powers can make a tangible difference in coping with transnational threats. Three threats to U.S. and global security pose existential danger and if their worst case is realized will threaten species, societies, and the planet's ecosystem: climate change, proliferation and use of nuclear weapons, and abuse of new discoveries in biotechnology. At the same time that these existential threats mount, civil and regional conflicts fester, states languish in poverty, and terrorism spreads. Two of these threats—civil and regional conflict, and terrorism—can become vectors for the existential threats of proliferation and use of nuclear and biological weapons. Poverty increases the risk of civil war, regional conflict, and deadly infectious disease, and robs states of the capacity to act in the face of transnational threats. Severe economic crises and instability create an environment that hinders states from seeking cooperative solutions to transnational threats. Because of interdependence, global security is only as strong as the weakest link, and international order depends on effective states with the capacity to exercise their sovereignty responsibly against all these threats.

These chapters illustrate how responsible sovereignty can be a foundational principle for international cooperation against transnational threats; they also identify the institutional arrangements to best align actors and capabilities to fit the problem. The United Nations, for example, should have a leadership role in coordinating postconflict peacekeeping or meeting emergency humanitarian needs.

In other areas the UN will not lead but will offer a platform to scrutinize commitments and performance (for example, on poverty eradication), or create a forum to negotiate international agreements (for example, climate change), or contribute operationally to building state capacity (for example, training in the rule of law). Similarly, roles will vary for other global, regional, and national actors and for the private sector and NGOs.

This is not multilateralism *à la carte*. Institutional alignment on given problems must be predictable in order to promote stability. Predictabil-

ity comes from agreed standards of responsible sovereignty and from investment in institutions so that they deliver.

In part III of the book we discuss what an international order based on responsibility can deliver. Global leaders must have confidence that a twenty-first-century international security system will produce better outcomes on the crises at the top of their national security agendas. Otherwise they will not invest the necessary resources and political energy to cultivate global partnerships and effective international institutions.

In chapter 10 we show how an international order based on responsible sovereignty can help in the hardest case, the broader Middle East. The Middle East is the most unstable region in the world and a vortex of transnational threats and interlocking crises from Palestine to Afghanistan. Unless crisis response in the region is galvanized through U.S. leadership and robust cooperation with the major and rising powers, regional stability, global energy supplies, and key security arrangements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are threatened.

The United States is neither solely responsible for nor solely capable of managing or resolving the several interlocking crises in the broader Middle East. Many states point to the U.S. role in stoking regional instability, civil war within Iraq, rising anti-Western sentiment, and volatility of international energy markets. Each member of the G-16 and much of the world, though, share an overriding interest in a stable Middle East. All will be worse off if crises in the Middle East escalate, if terrorism spreads further, if energy prices swing out of control, if Iraq falls into permanent chaos, or if tensions between the Arab/Muslim world and the West fester or escalate. The complexity of the challenge will require a truly international response.

In chapter 11 we weigh alternatives to the international order that we prescribe. Current global trends—rising tensions among major powers, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and escalation of conflicts in the broader Middle East—demonstrate the perils of a world tipping toward entropy. Although such trends make it more difficult to forge cooperative solutions to global problems, they also demonstrate why cooperative solutions are urgently needed. Some may agree that today's status quo is untenable, but they propose that international order is best pursued through multilateralism *a la carte* or through a "Concert or League of Democracies."

When carefully scrutinized, however, neither alternative would perform credibly. International order cannot be built in ad hoc configurations on an issue-by-issue basis; the interconnections among transnational threats require policy solutions that when addressing the problem at hand, do not exacerbate other problems or make them more intractable. Moreover, solutions to today's transnational threats require the contribution and consent of the new rising powers. Multilateralism *a la carte* ignores the festering resentment of these powers, who are becoming more intransigent in specific issue negotiations because they have not been accorded voice and influence in the larger international architecture.

Nor is greater cooperation among democracies an antidote for today's global problems. Democracies alone will not provide the international cooperation essential for addressing transnational threats. Ensuring security, enhancing prosperity, stopping deadly infectious disease, and solving global warming require cooperating with nondemocracies. Climate change or financial instability cannot be tackled without China. Nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, and energy security, cannot be furthered without Russia.

The key challenge for global cooperation is to find a way to bring old and new sources of power to bear on the transnational threats of the twenty-first century. An institution that helps the sixteen major and rising powers to reach common ground on shared threats has a far greater chance of producing effective results than an institution that strives to unify the interests and strategies of 60 to 100 democracies, only to find that cooperative solutions still depend on powers that are not at the table.

CONCLUSION

The twenty-first century will be defined by security threats unconstrained by borders—threats from climate change, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism to conflict, poverty, disease, and economic instability. The greatest test of global leadership will be building partnerships and institutions for cooperation that can meet the challenge. Although all states have a stake in solutions, responsibility for a peaceful and prosperous world will fall disproportionately to the major and rising powers. The United States most of all must provide leadership in an era of transnational threats.

In this book we put forward a vision of international order built on responsible sovereignty. In weighing this order, we encourage readers to take a cold, hard assessment of where we are now and to judge whether we are gaining the security and prosperity we need through existing international institutions and a policy of maintaining maximum freedom of action by the United States.

We also urge readers to compare this order against realistic alternatives. A long streak of idealism, in the United States and elsewhere, tends to weigh the value of international cooperation against a vision of perfect order. Today's version of that perfect order is a world where the United States can protect itself by dealing only with like-minded democratic countries, who will agree with U.S. policies.

In such comparisons cooperation always loses, for it seems too slow and too episodic. It requires patience as others participate in decision-making and demand to have their say and be heard. It is frustrating because it involves compromises. But in a world where your security and prosperity depend on the actions of others, cooperation is the only game in town.

In the United States, history offers a valuable lesson about the risks of perfectionism, which led to a turn inward in the 1920s and 1930s. As Franklin D. Roosevelt warned the public in 1945,

Perfectionism, no less than isolationism or imperialism or power politics, may obstruct the paths to international peace. Let us not forget that the retreat to isolationism a quarter of a century ago was started not by a direct attack against international cooperation but against the alleged imperfections of the peace. In our disillusionment after the last war we preferred international anarchy to international cooperation with nations which did not see and think exactly as we did. We gave up the hope of gradually achieving a better peace because we had not the courage to fulfill our responsibilities in an admittedly imperfect world.²¹

Today's world is still imperfect. In the next chapter we argue why it is in the interests of the powerful to find the courage to fulfill new responsibilities and build an international order for an age of transnational threats.