

# Challenges and Conundrums of a New Global Affairs Agenda

By Tom Barry, Codirector of Foreign Policy In Focus

*This Special Report is the introduction to **Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium**, the new Foreign Policy In Focus book published by St. Martin's Press that features major foreign policy analysts charting the dimensions of U.S. foreign policy. Also included in this book are provocative essays on U.S. policy in all major global regions and a comprehensive reform agenda.*

Worldwide, computerized counters roll over, calendars are replaced, and the digits of time advance. It is the mechanical, inexorable march of time, but these years and these numbers are different—they are infused with significance. Planetary history in 2000-2001 is turning from one century to another, from the end of one thousand years into a new millennium. At this juncture, as society and government are thrust into our next historical era, it is a time for reflection and resolution.

The challenges and conundrums of international affairs are diverse and manifold, but three major features of the global map stand in bold relief. Most striking is the degree to which the planet's citizens and their governments are buffeted by many of the same economic, environmental,

and political forces. Although common trends are making the world a smaller place and affirming the sense that we are all global citizens, the concept of the planet as a global village hides as much as it illustrates about the new state of global affairs. Hidden behind the one-world scenario is the deepening global divide between the economically privileged, market-skilled, and internet-wired on one side (metaphorically and largely geographically, the global North) and the disadvantaged, unskilled, and unconnected on the other side of the world (the global South). The third outstanding feature of this world map is the commanding position of the United States in global politics, military affairs, ideology, culture, information technology, trade, and investment.

## COMMON CHALLENGES AND CONUNDRUMS

The United States, while clearly standing alone because of its hegemonic reach, enters the new millennium confronting many of the same conundrums and challenges as other nations. Most apparent and pressing are those associated with rapid economic integration that pit workers and businesses in America against others worldwide. Increasingly evident at all latitudes and longitudes is the steady deterioration of ecological systems that have sustained the population and the economic growth of the last millennium. Politically, too, today's global citizens and their governments share many of the same concerns about the new constraints on national

sovereignty, the appropriate role for nongovernmental actors, and the direction of global governance.

Production, marketing, and finance—aided by new communications technology—have been increasingly integrated by globe-girdling corporations and banks. Globalization has made the world a smaller place but one deeply split by sharp economic divides. Economic globalization—backed ideologically by the neoliberal “Washington Consensus”—has swept around the planet. But the predictions that liberalized markets would in their wake bring prosperity and

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Foreign Policy In Focus (FPIF) aims to help forge a new global affairs agenda for the U.S. government and the U.S. public—an agenda that makes the U.S. a more responsible global leader and partner. The project responds to current foreign policy issues and crises with FPIF policy briefs, the *Progressive Response* ezine, and news briefings. In addition, FPIF publishes a series of special reports, a media guide of foreign policy analysts, and a biennial book on U.S. foreign policy.

FPIF's network of advocates, organizations, activists, and scholars functions as a "think tank without walls," reaching out to constituencies and foreign policy actors to ensure that U.S. foreign policy represents a more broadly conceived understanding of U.S. national interests.

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democratic reform are now being widely questioned. The downside of globalization—economic polarization, financial contagion, environmental plunder, and the destruction of social contracts—have become the defining characteristics of today's global economy.

made that U.S. national interests and U.S. national security are served by a more enlightened U.S. international environmental policy.

As the cold war ended, the ideological and military rivalry that determined political

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The world's population—North and South alike—is also waking up to a world of environmental limits. Northern—especially U.S.—patterns of consumption have brought the planet to the brink of environmental disaster. Population growth and rapid economic expansion in many parts of the South threaten to push the planet over the edge. Recognizing their common plight, the world's nations gathered in 1992 for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and came up with a common agenda of sustainable development. Unfortunately, as David Hunter of the Center for International Environmental Law has observed, "Virtually every major environmental indicator is worse today" and the summit's "rich body of treaties, action plans, and other instruments have not reversed global environmental decline."<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, both the policy community and the public recognize that the degradation of the global environment—destruction of rainforests, pollution of seas, holes in the ozone cap—threaten U.S. national interests and, as such, are appropriate U.S. foreign policy concerns. The State Department includes the advancement of international sustainable development as a foreign policy priority, but this new commitment is hampered by old limitations. Myopically, the Washington policy community has avoided measures that might adversely impact the short-term welfare of U.S. consumers and businesses. As with other aspects of global affairs, however, a strong argument can be

allegiances the world over suddenly dissipated, leaving countries and their peoples free to determine their own political directions. Initially, the possibilities seemed endless, exhilarating. But a more peaceful and just international order has not emerged. Instead political disorder and disintegration—as evident in a rash of ethnic conflicts, civil wars, and failing states—have characterized the era. The cloud of nuclear war was temporarily lifted. But in the absence of any commitment by the "great powers" of the Security Council to take the lead in abolishing nuclear weapons, the capacity to unleash nuclear catastrophe has spread to new states. The principle of multilateralism—long held hostage to the standoff between the socialist and capitalist power blocs—could have been a bedrock principle of a post-cold war future in which nations, acting together, created a "new world order." But like this now-empty phrase popularized by President George Bush, multilateralism seems an empty promise. As it has played out, multilateralism has been more a cover for militarism than a means of effective global governance.

After celebrating the end of the cold war, we have yet to positively identify the new political era. More than a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the political tag of today's world remains defined by the past. From New York to Berlin, New Delhi to Cairo, we are all still living in the political interregnum of the post-cold war era.

## THE INDISPENSABLE NATION

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is right: the United States is the “indispensable nation.” Although the broad political, economic, and environmental context is much the same the world over, America is the only country with the power and influence to shape the course of global affairs. No other country or grouping of nations has emerged to assume the kind of global leadership routinely practiced by the United States. In the last decade, America has used its superpower status to extend its economic and military dominance and has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to use this power unilaterally to meet perceived threats to its hegemony.

To a large degree, how the U.S. government defines its “national interests” and regards its “national security” determines the way it exercises its leadership. Thus far it has opted for a narrow definition of national interests and a broad definition of national security. Increasingly, the United States regards its national interests as the economic interests of corporate America: what’s good for U.S.-based global corporations is good for America. More difficult to define is the current concept of national security, although it clearly extends far beyond the U.S. government’s sovereign right to defend national borders. During the cold war the United States defined national security largely in terms of containing communism and fortifying the “free world.”

The collapse of the Soviet Union did not result in any downsizing of national security doctrine; on the contrary, U.S. national security was globalized. Today, the major components of U.S. national security include the right to maintain overwhelming U.S. military superiority, to intervene decisively throughout the world, and to identify

and target threats to global stability. William D. Hartung of the World Policy Institute concludes that the United States seeks to “retain the capability to serve as a sort of ‘globocop,’ charging to the rescue to restore order, stability, and ‘free markets’ when they are threatened by the forces of evil and chaos.”<sup>2</sup>

Washington has taken advantage of the

absolutely determined to bend others to its will.”<sup>3</sup> In the process, Washington has dashed the near-term prospects for building a world order distinguished by multilateralism and compromise. As a result, most other nations have come to resent and distrust U.S. leadership.

If U.S. policymakers and citizens are to establish a more responsible U.S. global lead-

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unipolar conditions of the first post-cold war decade to assert and extend its dominance rather than to support the institutions and international relations necessary to decrease dependence on U.S. might. Charles W. Maynes of the Euraisa Foundation calls this “negative leadership.” He argues that because the United States currently enjoys such a surplus of power, “it is now possible for Washington to have a very ambitious foreign policy and still remain unilateral in its approach toward the outside world. The United States is perhaps now the only country in the world that can, to a very significant measure, get its way internationally if it is

ership—sometimes referred to as a more “benevolent hegemony”—the first step is a major overhaul of the current working definitions of U.S. national interests and U.S. national security. Fortunately, there is a vibrant debate among activists and scholars outside the hidebound foreign policy establishment about what U.S. national interests truly are and what national security should rightly mean. In addressing such issues as the need for more effective global governance, an expanded role for nongovernmental voices in foreign policy, and the prevention of ecological collapse, citizen groups are charting the path toward a new global affairs agenda.

## GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Americans can be proud of the U.S. leadership role in establishing the institutional structures of global governance. Recognizing the need for institutions that would foster collective security

and global economic development, the United States guided the formation of the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. In addition, U.S. leadership in the aftermath of World

War II was central in creating an international framework for trade that broke down mercantile structures and helped prevent mutually destructive trade wars. The failures and flaws of the post-cold war system of

global governance are all too apparent, but the continuing need for structures of global governance are just as self-evident.

The cold war's end has offered the United States a new opportunity to use its leadership to redesign the architecture of global governance to overcome structural weaknesses and meet the new challenges presented by economic globalization and the rise of civil conflicts. Unfortunately, this opportunity has thus far been squandered—on both the collective security and economic fronts. With his announcement of the creation of a “new world order” at the start of the Persian Gulf War, President Bush demonstrated the shallow, triumphal, benighted character of America's post-cold war leadership. Initially, the Clinton administration offered hope of a more enlightened vision with its embrace of “assertive multilateralism.” In practice, however, Clinton's version of a new U.S. internationalism became that of an “indispensable nation” that shunned or manipulated the United Nations, recklessly resorted to military responses, and blithely assumed that what was good for the U.S. economy was good for the world.

An early criticism of the Clinton administration was that it had no foreign policy vision. Some joked that the sum of Clinton's foreign policy experience had been gleaned at the International House of Pancakes. In office, however, Clinton became the most globally traveled president in U.S. history—and the most interventionist, sending U.S. troops on more foreign missions than any of his predecessors. Yet although the Clinton administration never articulated a cohesive global affairs agenda, through its actions and policies it demonstrated a clear sense of purpose in matters of global governance—particularly on commercial and financial matters but increasingly on military and strategic fronts as well. Clinton, reflecting the prevailing conviction of the Washington foreign policy establishment, advanced an aggressive free trade agenda as the only viable set of rules for international economic engagement.

Despite experiencing some setbacks, notably the defeats of fast-track authority in 1997 and 1998, the administration relentlessly (and to a large extent successfully) promoted the extension of free trade governance, mainly through the World Trade Organization (WTO) but also bilaterally and regionally. The short-range and self-aggrandizing character of U.S. international economic leadership revealed itself at the

outset of the financial crisis in Asia. Instead of using its influence to strengthen the foundations of international financial governance, Washington regarded the crisis mainly as another opportunity to break down barriers blocking the advance of U.S. capital.

The main thrust of U.S. leadership in the global economy has not been to build a framework of global decisionmaking but to use trade agreements and the WTO to dismantle forms of national governance that regulate trade and investment flows. Although the liberalization schemes of the “Wall Street-Treasury” complex have resulted in a booming U.S. stock market and sustained growth, these are not the recipes for long-term economic stability either at home or abroad.

Before the global economy stumbles disastrously as a result of financial crisis contagion or deflation and before anti-globalization fever gives way to nationalist reaction, Washington policymakers would be wise to heed the ample warning signs and move away from what William Minter of the Africa Policy Information Center calls its “free market fundamentalism.”<sup>4</sup>

components of this new consensus, such as fundamental reforms of the Bretton Woods institutions and trade agreements that advance dignified jobs and healthy communities.

Yet a clear and present danger is that the United States and other developed nations will back new rules that mainly protect living standards at home while ignoring the pressing need to address the widening income and technology gap between North and South. Meeting the challenges of the global economy will mean creating a good name for global economic governance—which will never happen as long as Washington allows corporate America to dictate the rules of the world economy. As John Cavanagh of the Institute for Policy Studies notes, “Utilizing their trade associations, pressure groups, and thousands of well-paid lobbyists, corporations have been able to shape U.S. policy so they are the prime beneficiaries.”<sup>6</sup>

Globalization—perceived threats of foreign workers, cheap imports, foreign capital, and so forth—has become a convenient scapegoat for the failure to build constituencies for reform of national economic policy. Clearly, there is a need for improved global

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The challenge is for Washington to build a new consensus on global commercial and financial engagement—one that will give governments a measure of flexibility to protect vulnerable sectors and to control destabilizing capital flows. In his essay, David Felix proposes a new reform agenda that would update the Bretton Woods financial architecture, “helping to restore some of the stable, equitable growth of yesteryear, while supplying some of the institutional building blocks for erecting a genuinely integrated global economy in the future.”<sup>5</sup> Scholars and activists at home and abroad are supplying the blueprints for the main

economic governance that does not undermine national development strategies that are sustainable, equitable, and contribute to commonly beneficial international economic integration. At the same time, however, domestic legislation is needed that puts full employment, income distribution objectives, workers' rights, public infrastructure investment, and educational and health services at the top of the policy agenda. For the United States, the prescription “thinking globally and acting locally” has special relevance given America's modeling impact on the global economy. A renewed and expanded commitment to the social democratic

management of the economy at home is the essential first step for any effective new leadership role abroad.

Although the U.S. government has aggressively pursued the expansion of global economic governance through the WTO and regional integration agreements, it has been less enthusiastic about global governance that aims to maintain collective security and uphold international norms. This differentiated posture is easily explained, given that Washington believes that U.S. national economic interests—namely the welfare of U.S. corporations and investors—are well-served by the current instruments of global economic governance. It is true, of course, that occasionally the U.S. government excepts itself from the international rules in the name of national security or to protect a politically powerful economic sector. However, for the most part, the United States plays by the international economic rules that it has been so central in shaping.

In contrast, U.S. exceptionalism is the main feature of its relationship with the political manifestations of global governance. One might have logically expected that the United Nations—gridlocked for decades by the cold war—would have become a stronger international institution after the Soviet demise. But rather than acting to help realize the UN's vast potential, Washington chose to continue its policy of working in concert with the UN only when it was convenient. Largely as a result of Washington's disregard for UN authority and the U.S. reluctance to meet its financial obligations, the United Nations has withered rather than blossomed since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Instead of a real commitment to construct a new world order based on multilateralism rather than superpower politics, the U.S. government has established itself as the final arbiter of international peace and security. It has appointed itself as the archangel of international peace, sweeping down against all the Lucifers of the underworld whenever it deems fit. Unlike either the gunboat diplomacy era, when the U.S. intervened abroad mostly to protect its direct economic interests, or during the cold war, when the U.S. intervened in the name of protecting the "free world" against communist advances, today Washington has assumed a grander imperial mission. The economic and political stability of the entire planet is now its purview, which includes striking down

rogue angels and unleashing its holy wrath on terrorists, drug traffickers, and other threats to world order.

Recognizing that, acting alone, it cannot accomplish its mission of maintaining this post-cold war order, the U.S. government has launched a vast global network of police and military training programs while entrusting NATO with an expanded regional role.

forge a common foreign policy and collective security regimen, by either abolishing NATO or looking eastward to include Russia, and by promoting the establishment of an Asian common security agreement that would include both Japan and China. Globally, the challenge is to use U.S. influence to jump-start structural reform at the UN, sorely needed to make it a more credible and effective institution. In other

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The United States as global peacekeeper is untenable: morally, financially, and politically. Washington is not an impartial arbiter and enforcer of global peace and security. It is a globocop but a selective one. No longer does it maintain the pretension of being willing to "bear any burden" or "pay any price," but instead has become highly selective about where and when it intervenes. Evaluations of U.S. national interests and the potential for U.S. casualties are primary considerations. Don't count on the globocop to stop genocide in a backwater state like Rwanda, where U.S. interests are few.

As the U.S. government finds itself overextended and despised in world opinion for its superpower hubris, America's post-World War II commitment to multilateralism in the cause of world peace should be revisited. Paying its UN dues and respecting the UN process are Washington's required first steps. But greater leadership will be needed to meet the multiple challenges of global peace and security.

On a regional level, Washington itself must encourage the transition away from U.S. dominance by encouraging European Union governments in their new efforts to

words, U.S. leadership is required to help establish the processes and methods that will diminish its central role in global governance and make room for a multipolar world—one in which U.S. leadership is valued more for its wisdom than feared for its raw power.

Closely related to collective security governance is respect for international norms like human rights. No other country is as outspoken about civil liberties and democracy as the United States. The State Department's annual human rights reports offer regular and often harsh criticism of abusive practices around the world, and the president and other administration officials routinely upbraid other heads of state for human rights abuses at summits and regional forums. However, at the same time, no other nation is so responsible for the failure of the international community to establish respect for civil liberties as a fundamental norm. After a half century the U.S. still has not ratified one of the two Geneva human rights accords, and recently Washington has sought to undermine accords banning land mines, prohibiting the use of child soldiers, and establishing an international criminal court. Rather than being an operative principle of

U.S. foreign policy, advancing human rights is part of the U.S. foreign policy toolbox, increasingly used during the past couple of decades, although only selectively and rarely against countries regarded to be strategically or economically important. The credibility of U.S. human rights policy is further undermined by U.S. unwillingness to subject itself to scrutiny of its own practices.

Although an institutional framework is critical to global governance—whether economic, political, or military—the widespread acceptance of international norms such as basic human rights and core labor rights is also a fundamental component. Rather than obstructing attempts to strengthen international norms and insisting on U.S. exceptionalism, the United States should recognize that its broader national interests would be well-served by efforts to extend these dimensions of global governance.

A critical component of the U.S. leadership challenge is to build public support for global governance. In part, this will mean giving up some U.S. control over these institutions and encouraging a new leadership role for major powers like Japan and Germany as well as Southern nations. It is likely, however, that the United States will get more than it gives in any expansion of global governance. Given its pervasive eco-

nomical interests and increasing dependence on international transactions, the United States stands to benefit from the kind of global governance that keeps national economies afloat in times of crisis, encourages sustainable development, fosters

shift budget priorities from military obligations to programs that meet domestic needs and promote the general welfare of the global community.

The U.S. should also be acting globally to advance international environmental norms

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equitable economic growth in the South, and keeps trade disputes from degenerating into destructive protectionism or conflict. Similarly, regional collective security arrangements—together with a more effective UN peacekeeping capacity—would free the U.S. government (and its taxpayers) to

and to help less privileged nations meet those norms. But the key role the U.S. government and its citizens can play is to alter America's unsustainable patterns of consumption—and in that process to advance the development of environmental technology and more sustainable systems of production.

## THE NGO CHALLENGE

Foreign policy and global affairs have never been the exclusive realm of presidents, generals, and diplomats. The outrage, concern, and vision of citizen groups have historically played a fundamental role in shaping the U.S. role in foreign

new constraints on national sovereignty, nonstate actors have expanded their influence in global affairs—and, in doing so, have assumed a powerful role in global governance. The emergence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as visionaries and

small arms trade, arms sales code of conduct), human rights (child soldiers, international criminal court, truth commissions), sustainable development (rainforest conservation, climate change, trade and environment), global economy (social clauses, corporate codes of conduct, debt restructuring), and global governance (accountability, transparency). To a large degree, citizen diplomats are forging the global affairs agenda of the 21st century.

Previously operating as external pressure groups shaping foreign policy and public opinion, NGOs have become central actors in this new era. Taking to the streets, citizens of East and West Berlin tore down the iron curtain. Since then “civil society” has been demanding a place at the table in international economic, political, and military negotiations. Yet in pressing for the

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affairs. As World War II raged, for example, peace organizations and churches provided the visionary and practical foundation for U.S. proposals to create the United Nations.

Though advances in communications technology and economic globalization place

instruments of change is perhaps the most hopeful development of this new era. Progressive activists in international networks have proved to be the key actors in setting new directions regarding issues of international security (land mines treaty,

restructuring of international negotiations and institutions to include a formal place for nongovernmental actors, civil society proponents should recognize the attendant risks. Already, business associations, for example, have moved into the opening created by social justice and environmental NGOs, asserting that they express the demands and aspirations of civil society. With their easier access to funds, such groups may be better placed to take advantage of the “power shift” that has brought NGOs into global governance.

As NGOs press for a formal role in foreign policy decisionmaking and in international institutions—asserting that such participation will democratize global affairs—

their own lack of democratic, transparent, representative structures and processes is increasingly being called into question, and rightly so. Compounding this problem is the disproportionate number and power of NGOs from the North. The power shift in this context can accentuate North-South inequities, especially when Northern NGOs and Northern governments work in concert. Although the United States is not so directly affected as less powerful states, U.S. citizens and policymakers should be concerned that NGOs can serve as a cover for privatization and weakening of state structures. Direct and indirect U.S. funding of foreign NGOs, while largely for worthy ends, may undermine local political

processes and development, elevating non-representative civil society organizations while sidelining political parties and popular organizations that might otherwise serve as agents of change.

Setting the directions of U.S. foreign policy in the 21st century needs to be a more inclusive process, one that takes full advantage of the visionary qualities and determination of the global NGO networks. Their close connections with the grassroots, their new internationalist convictions, and their nontraditional sense of national interests and national security make NGOs valuable collaborators in forging a new global affairs agenda.

## A NEW GLOBAL AFFAIRS AGENDA

A common observation at the outset of the post-cold war era was that nobody—not in government, not in the think-tank world, not in the activist community—had a principled, coherent vision of what exact role the United States should play in global affairs. As a new millennium begins, the problem with the U.S. global affairs agenda is different. The basic principles of a new “grand strategy” for a responsible U.S. foreign policy have been advanced by a diverse community of activists, advocacy groups, scholars, and a few policymakers. But the Democratic and Republican leadership have dismissed this visionary proposal in favor of an agenda pieced together from old policies and practices.

The prevailing U.S. foreign policy agenda, likely to continue into the next administration, is marked by five major features. It is (1) retrograde, (2) driven by special interests, (3) guided by short-term objectives, (4) interventionist and above international law, and (5) domineering.

Most striking is its retrograde character. Despite all the political hype about leading the country into the next century, Washington’s foreign policy establishment is more comfortable dredging up policy from the past than pursuing new initiatives. Examples include the resurrection of the “Star Wars” missile defense system, the revival of the cold war relic NATO, and the renewal of the “open door” economic imperialism of the late 19th century, which

permitted America’s forced entry into foreign markets.

A second distinguishing feature is the degree to which foreign policy is dominated not by strategists and diplomats but by special interests. Military contractors seek to keep the military budget high and arms exports rising, and pharmaceutical companies demand that poor nations use

donations, their influence on foreign policy is likely to continue until there is significant reform of campaign finance laws.

The short-term thinking that characterizes U.S. foreign policy, particularly the global economy and environmental policies, reflects the narrow interpretation of U.S. national interests in Washington. Obscuring the benefits of a long-term strategy to foster

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trademark drugs rather than less expensive generic ones in the name of protecting intellectual property rights. Because these special interests exercise enormous influence in the election process through campaign

broad-based sustainable development, the annual profit reports of U.S. corporations are given foremost consideration.

Increasingly sophisticated (but not always accurate) arms technology has allowed the

United States to intervene militarily (in Panama, Iraq, Sudan, Kosovo, etc.) with little risk to U.S. troops and with little regard for international law. Emerging from the cold war with no foes, the United States now swaggers across the international arena, relying more on the politics of domination than of compromise. Its domineering presence—sparking resentment and damaging prospects for multilateral global governance—has not given rise to other global leaders, affirming the U.S. conceit that the 21st century will be another American century.

During the 1990s the outlines of an alternative agenda gradually came into focus. As within the official foreign policy community, there exist within the reform community many differences about tactics and even different interpretations of the operative principles. However, one would be mistaken to assume that the contrast between the official and the alternative agendas is the contrast between realism and idealism. Although the new global affairs agenda is certainly visionary, it addresses the unresolved foreign policy issues of our era in a practical way. At a time when the U.S. Treasury Department is holding the course on failed financial liberalization policies, the reform agenda offers pragmatic alternatives to address financial contagion, capital flows crises, and the chaos resulting from unregulated speculative investment. The main prescription is the highly practical suggestion that foreign economic policy be guided not by a narrow ideology benefiting a corporate elite but by its

commitment to benefit the broad majority. Regarding the current political and military projections of U.S. power, the reform agenda recommends a more holistic assessment of what constitutes U.S. long-range national interests and security.

In large measure the new global affairs agenda is based on the principles first set out in the U.S. constitution, namely that the U.S. government should “provide for the common defense” and “promote the general welfare.” Rather than projecting military power abroad, the Defense Department should be primarily concerned about military threats against U.S. borders and U.S. citizens. Since the United States faces no powerful enemies, there should be a major retrenchment in the U.S. military mission and budget. Promoting the general welfare will mean a major change in direction in U.S. foreign policy—away from a narrow corporate interpretation of U.S. interests toward an assessment of potential impacts on the health, welfare, and happiness of all Americans.

But the new global affairs agenda, while wary of U.S. interventionism and considerate of the best interests of Americans, is hardly an inward-looking vision of the future. President George Washington’s advice that the United States avoid foreign “entanglements” was well-taken at the time, but today’s world is inextricably integrated. The challenge is not to untangle ourselves but to support the methods and institutions of global governance that foster peace and

sustainable development around the globe.

*Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium*, a new book produced by Foreign Policy In Focus, attempts to set forth some of the best thinking about the state of U.S. foreign policy and about an alternative agenda. This process of detailing a new global affairs agenda is a necessary first step. Still more challenging is the task of advancing and implementing such an agenda. Success requires efforts on multiple fronts. Perhaps most important is the educational and outreach work necessary to ensure public support for a reform agenda that posits a new, more expansive vision of U.S. national interests. Strong political leadership is also essential, but even more important will be unrelenting citizen activism that forces politicians to listen and act. Finally, little is possible without the tireless lobbying work of the advocacy organizations that, issue by issue, move the reform agenda forward in Washington.

As the millennium turns, the prospects for a new era of international peace and sustainable development seem remote. Although there are some hopeful signs, such as the rise of NGO activism and new consciousness about environmental deterioration, most indicators are negative. Issue by issue, region by region, the authors of these collected essays address the central conundrums and most pressing challenges—each pointing to the kind of responsible U.S. leadership that can help turn the world around.

## REFERENCE NOTES

<sup>1</sup> David Hunter, "Global Environmental Protection in the 21st Century," *Global Focus: U.S. Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium*.

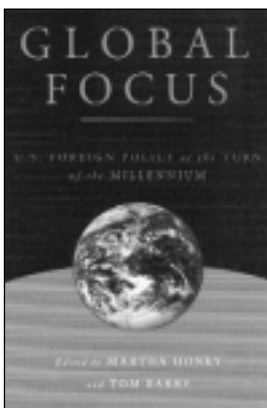
<sup>2</sup> William D. Hartung, "Military-Industrial Complex Revisited: How Weapons Makers are Shaping U.S. Foreign and Military Policies," *Global Focus*.

<sup>3</sup> Charles W. Maynes, "America's Fading Commitment to the World," *Global Focus*.

<sup>4</sup> William Minter, "United States and Africa: Starting Points for a New Policy Framework," *Global Focus*.

<sup>5</sup> David Felix, "Repairing the Global Financial Architecture: Painting over Cracks vs. Strengthening the Foundations," *Global Focus*.

<sup>6</sup> John Cavanagh, "U.S. Leadership in the Global Economy," *Global Focus*.



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