

freedom of their fellow citizens in the United States—not their freedom from foreign governments, but their freedom from the need to make their own government strong enough to protect them by making it too strong for liberty. The purpose of the American way of strategy has always been to defend the American way of life.

### The Fundamental Purpose of the United States

In 1950 the senior staff of the National Security Council, under the leadership of Paul Nitze, the head of policy planning in the State Department, submitted a memorandum to President Harry Truman known as NSC-68. The document laid out a strategy of “containment” of the Soviet Union, which the United States adopted and followed from the early 1950s until the end of the Cold War in the mid-1980s.

By the standards of traditional Old World statecraft, NSC-68 is a peculiar document. The paper begins with a statement of “The Fundamental Purpose of the United States.” It is hard to imagine a British or French strategic memorandum beginning with “The Fundamental Purpose of Britain” or “The Fundamental Purpose of France.” According to NSC-68: “The fundamental purpose of the United States is laid down in the Preamble to the Constitution: ‘. . . to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.’ In essence, the fundamental purpose is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual.”

The document continues: “Three realities emerge as a consequence of this purpose: Our determination to maintain the essential elements of individual freedom, as set forth in the Constitution and Bill of Rights; our determination to create conditions under which our free and democratic system can live and prosper; and our determination to fight if necessary to defend our way of life, for which as in the Declaration of Independence, ‘with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.’”

NSC-68 discusses the threat to the American way of life that would result from a U.S. policy that allowed the Soviet Union to dominate Europe and Asia by intimidation or conquest: “As the Soviet Union mobilized the

military resources of Eurasia, increased its relative military capabilities, and heightened its threat to our security, some [Americans] would be tempted to accept ‘peace’ on its terms, while many would seek to defend the United States by creating a regimented system which would permit the assignment of a tremendous part of our resources to defense. Under such a state of affairs our national morale would be corrupted and the integrity and vitality of our system subverted.”<sup>2</sup>

For decades, isolationists on the right and left have denounced NSC-68 as a sinister blueprint for a militaristic American empire. But as a reading of the document itself makes clear, the policy of containing the Soviet Union by means of European and Asian alliances, combined with negotiation from a position of military strength, was designed to avoid the need for a grim choice between regimenting American society and making peace with the Soviet Union on Soviet terms. In 1950 the authors of NSC-68 argued that a Cold War policy of containment was less dangerous to the American way of life than the alternatives.

### Of Arms and the Republic

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who succeeded President Truman, agreed. On April 16, 1953, Eisenhower gave an address entitled, “The Chance for Peace,” his first formal address to the American people following his inauguration as president. Eisenhower blamed “the amassing of Soviet power” for forcing the United States and other nations “to spend unprecedented money and energy for armaments.” Rhetorically he asked: “What can the world, or any nation in it, hope for if no turning is found on this dread road? The worst to be feared and the best to be expected can be simply stated. The worst is atomic war. The best would be this: a life of perpetual fear and tension; a burden of arms draining the wealth and the labor of all peoples; a wasting of strength that defies the American system or the Soviet system or any system to achieve true abundance and happiness for the peoples of this earth.”

Eisenhower then uttered words that have been widely quoted: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, ever rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes

of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some fifty miles of concrete pavement. We pay for a single fighter plane with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people."

The president concluded: "This is, I repeat, the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense."<sup>3</sup>

Eisenhower returned to the dangers of the militarization of American society in his Farewell Address to the American people on January 17, 1961: "This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience . . . We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society."

He then uttered the famous words: "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex . . . We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together."<sup>4</sup>

### What Woodrow Wilson Feared

In 1919 President Woodrow Wilson, having returned from the Versailles Peace Conference that followed World War I, was touring the nation by train. At every stop he pleaded with the American people to encourage the U.S. Senate to ratify the treaty that would make the United States a member of the new League of Nations. Wilson believed that if the great powers of the world replaced the "balance of power" with a "community of power" then wars would be far less frequent and the United States and other nations would be secure with a far lower level of military mobilization.

The alternative was an America permanently mobilized for war, Wilson warned an audience in St. Louis on September 5, 1919: "We must be physi-

cally ready for anything to come. We must have a great standing army. We must see to it that every man in America is trained to arms. We must see to it that there are munitions and guns enough for an army that means a mobilized nation . . . You have got to think of the President of the United States, not as the chief counselor of the Nation, elected for a little while, but as the man meant constantly and everyday to be the Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy . . . And you know what the effect of a military government is upon social questions. You know how impossible it is to effect social reform if everybody must be under orders from the government. You know how impossible it is, in short, to have a free nation if it is a military nation and under military orders."<sup>5</sup>

Even now, almost a century later, Wilson's passion is striking. Here was a victorious war leader who hoped to prevent future world wars. Here was a commander-in-chief who, having presided over the mobilization of millions of soldiers and the conscription of America's vast industrial resources, hoped that American men and American factories would never need to be drafted again. Here was a president for whom a nation in arms was not an ideal but a nightmare.<sup>6</sup>

Paul Nitze and his colleagues, Dwight Eisenhower, and Woodrow Wilson argued for different American strategies: Nitze and Eisenhower for different versions of the anti-Soviet policy of containment, Wilson for U.S. participation in the League of Nations. However, they agreed on the test of any American strategy: it must reinforce, rather than undermine, the American way of life.

The American way of life. The phrase may seem quaint—a cliché of political oratory, a cartoon formula like Superman's fight for "truth, justice and the American way." But foreign policy thinkers who dismiss the idea of "the American way of life" and focus on "vital interests" as the basis of U.S. foreign policy are guilty of a profound philosophical and political error. For there is no interest more vital in American foreign policy and no ideal more important than the preservation of the American way of life.

### The American Creed

To understand the American way of life, it is necessary to understand the public philosophy of the United States: the American Creed.



The ordinary American, asked what the United States stands for, answers "Freedom," not "Democracy" or "Republicanism." The American people take pride in thinking of their country as the "land of liberty" or "the land of the free," in the words of the U.S. national anthem, not as the home of competitive elections or constitutional checks and balances, as important as are those institutions. In addition, some Americans can still be found who insist that the United States is not a democracy, but a republic. From the eighteenth century until the twentieth, many American statesmen and thinkers took care to describe the United States as a "democratic republic."

They were right to do so. The political ideal of the American Creed is not adequately described by the phrase "liberal democracy." That phrase, in which "democracy" is the noun and "liberal" the modifying adjective, implies that democracy, defined as representative government, is more fundamental and important than liberalism, defined as government based on human rights. This has never been the mainstream American view. Even worse, the phrase "liberal democracy" completely leaves out the important concept of a "republic," which many Americans from the eighteenth century onward have defined as a constitutional government, not necessarily democratic, based on checks and balances among independent branches of government. In his *Defence of the Constitutions of the United States of America* (1787), which influenced the framers of the U.S. Constitution, John Adams, who became the second president of the United States, criticized those who treated the word "republic" as a synonym for "representative democracy."<sup>7</sup>

The American political ideal is not "liberal democracy." It is "democratic republican liberalism." In democratic republican liberalism, the noun is "liberalism," in the sense of government based on individual rights, and the adjective that modifies it is "democratic republican." This hierarchy in grammar reflects the order of importance of these concepts in American thought, which subordinates democratic republicanism to liberalism. The government of the United States is liberal in substance and a democratic republic in form.

In other countries there are political traditions in which the most important value is democracy or republicanism. But in Anglo-American thought, liberalism has always been more fundamental than republicanism, in democratic or other forms. In *The Idea of a Patriot King* (1749), which influ-

enced eighteenth-century liberals in Britain and America, Henry Saint-John Bolingbroke wrote: "The good of the people is the ultimate and true end of government . . . now the greatest good of the people is their liberty . . ."<sup>8</sup> "That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men" is the theory of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. All governments do not have to be republics to be good. But all good governments ought to be liberal.

Americans are not democrats first, or republicans first. Americans are liberals who happen to be republicans and republicans who happen to be democrats. Democratic republicanism is not an end in itself but merely a means to the end of liberal government.

Republican liberalism is the most accurate shorthand description of the American Creed. Before it was American, the American Creed was English. Seventeenth-century English thinkers who influenced the American Founders, like John Locke, united the tradition of republican government, inherited from Greece, Rome, and the Italian Renaissance, with the idea of natural individual rights, a legacy of medieval and Protestant thought. The synthesis that resulted was republican liberalism.<sup>9</sup> In Britain the tradition of republican liberalism has only been one of a number of important schools of political thought, and far from the most important in recent generations. In the British North American colonies that became the United States, republican liberalism in the form of the American Creed became the secular civil religion.<sup>10</sup>

## Republican Liberty

What did George Washington mean when he distinguished republican liberty from other kinds of liberty?

The first President of the United States made that distinction in his Farewell Address to the American people in 1796. According to Washington, by maintaining a federal union that allowed them to pool their defense costs, the individual states of the Union "will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is that your union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other."

Why did Washington, the former commander-in-chief of the American army, say that "overgrown military establishments . . . under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and . . . are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty"? How does "republican liberty," in particular, differ from other kinds of liberty? And why is the minimization of defense costs, by means of a common federal military policy, so important that it is not only a "prop" of liberty, but, according to Washington, "a main prop of your liberty"? If all of this sounds more than a little odd to modern ears, it is because the language that General Washington shared with General Eisenhower is in danger of being forgotten. That is the language of republican liberalism.

In his Farewell Address, Washington alluded to the distinction that republican liberals made between individual liberty and republican liberty. By individual liberty, they mean the rights of individuals to freedom of movement, freedom of speech, as well as property rights and civil rights, like the right to due process under law. By republican liberty, they mean the right of an entire community to self-government. Individuals can no more exercise republican liberty than communities can exercise individual liberty.

Republican liberty has two aspects, one external and one internal. The external aspect of republican liberty is self-determination, defined as the independence of a people from control by other political communities. The internal aspect of republican liberty is popular sovereignty, defined as the independence of a people from control by an unaccountable government. When seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British and American thinkers referred to "free states," they were not talking about states that respected the civil liberties and property rights of individuals. They were talking about states that were independent of other states and accountable to their own citizens.

According to republican liberalism, not all liberal states need be republican. Republican liberals acknowledge that some empires have respected the autonomy of their subject peoples, and some autocrats have granted their subjects a high degree of personal freedom. There have been liberal empires, liberal monarchies, and liberal dictatorships.

But such liberalism is a grant from an uncontrolled power to the communities or individuals it rules. Liberty bestowed by an absolute monarch or an empire is a gift, not a right. The grant of liberty may be withdrawn. Yesterday's benevolent empire may become today's oppressive empire; a

good king may be succeeded by a tyrannical king. Therefore republican liberals have believed that, while liberty may exist in non-republican regimes, it is secure only in a liberal state that combines political independence in foreign affairs with a republican constitution based on power sharing among several branches or authorities.

The basis for the thesis that republicanism reinforces liberalism is the premise that laws are most likely to be just if those who make the law have to live under the law they make. An imperial official who does not have to live under the laws he makes for a subjugated colonial population is less likely to take the interests of that population into account than their own elected leaders would be. And a monarch, dictator, aristocracy, or oligarchy enjoying an exemption from the rules imposed on the rest of the population is all but certain to abuse the privilege. The ancient ideal of "the rule of law, not men" is most likely to be realized in an independent state with a republican government, according to the tradition of republican liberalism.

### The Two Constitutions of a Democratic Republic

An independent republican liberal state need not be a nation-state; before the nineteenth century, most republics were city-states, not nation-states. It need not even be completely independent; a republican liberal state could be a self-governing city, province, or nation within a larger kingdom, empire, or federation. Nor need a republican liberal state be a democracy; most premodern republics were aristocratic republics, not democratic republics.

The United States was created as a democratic republic, that is, a republic in which the citizenry, whose members possess political as well as legal rights, corresponds to most or all of the adult population. Over the course of two centuries this ideal was realized by the extension of equal rights in practice as well as theory first to all adult white men, regardless of wealth, then to all white adults, including women, and finally to adult citizens of all races.

When Americans have said their country is a democratic republic, they have not meant simply that the government is democratic republican in form, but also that the society and economy are democratic republican in form. Following Aristotle, Machiavelli, the seventeenth-century English republican philosopher James Harrington, and others, Americans beginning with the eighteenth-century Founders have believed that a democratic



republic is most likely to flourish where the majority of people belong to a prosperous middle class. In a society divided between a few rich and many poor, republican institutions were unlikely to endure. In Latin America and other regions, there have long been countries whose constitutions were formally democratic republican, but whose societies were aristocratic or oligarchic, not democratic republican in terms of the actual distribution of property, prestige, and power. This was also the case in some of the class-stratified big cities in the Northeast and much of the American South.<sup>11</sup>

John Adams argued in 1776 that "power always follows property." For this reason, Adams proposed "to make the acquisition of land easy to every member of society" or else "to make a division of land into small quantities, so that the multitude may be possessed of landed estates."<sup>12</sup> The United States started out very well, in this regard, outside of the slave South. In mid-eighteenth-century Britain, two-thirds of adult white males were landless and only one-third owned land; in the American colonies, the proportions were exactly the reverse.<sup>13</sup> In his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), St. John Crèvecoeur wrote: "Europe contains hardly any other distinctions but lords and tenants; this fair country alone is settled by freeholders, the possessors of the soil they cultivate, members of the government they obey, and the framers of their own laws . . ." <sup>14</sup> As Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri observed in 1826: "The freeholder . . . is the natural supporter of a free government, and it should be the policy of republics to multiply their freeholders, as it is the policy of monarchies to multiply tenants. We are a republic, and we wish to remain so; then multiply the class of freeholders . . ." <sup>15</sup> Franklin Roosevelt agreed in 1936: "In our national life, public and private, the very nature of free government demands that there must be a line of defense held by the yeomanry of business and industry and agriculture. . . . Any elemental policy, economic or political, which tends to eliminate these dependable defenders of democratic institutions, and to concentrate control in the hands of a few small, powerful groups, is directly opposed to the stability of government and to democratic government itself."<sup>16</sup>

The United States, then, is a democratic republic that has two constitutions: a formal constitution of government, based on separation of powers, checks and balances, and frequent elections; and an informal constitution of society, based on the dominance in culture and politics of a free, edu-

cated, prosperous middle-class citizenry. The middle-class social constitution complements and reinforces the democratic republican government constitution.

### American Nightmares

The American dream is the aspiration of Americans to be free and prosperous citizens of a free and prosperous country, to achieve personal independence in a country that itself is independent of foreign control.

The American nightmare is the antithesis of the American dream. The American nightmare comes in four versions: the Caesarist tyranny, the garrison state, the tributary state, and the castle society.

The United States is unlikely to become a Caesarist tyranny because of a military or presidential coup d'état.<sup>17</sup> The more plausible and frightening scenario is one in which the American people sacrifice their liberty, their sovereignty, or both to obtain safety from foreign danger. To preserve their safety from foreign threats, the American people might create one of three versions of the American nightmare: the garrison state, the tributary state, or the castle society. In different ways each is incompatible with the American way of life.

The garrison state reduces the liberty and prosperity of citizens directly. It restricts their freedom by law and takes their property to pay for an enormous military and an immense internal security apparatus. A garrison state at its most extreme may draft everyone and socialize the economy.<sup>18</sup>

The tributary state preserves the liberty and prosperity of citizens, if only for a time, by surrendering national sovereignty under the pressure of foreign intimidation. In return for being allowed autonomy in its internal affairs, the nation surrenders its independence in foreign affairs. The danger of this strategy is evident: if the aggressor decided to renege on the bargain and dictate internal as well as external policy, the country might be unarmed and unprepared to resist.

In a castle society liberty and prosperity are not taken away by the state; they simply wither away because of anarchic conditions. Freedom is meaningless to someone who is imprisoned by fear in a house or apartment that has become a barricaded bunker. Citizens who must spend much of their income on personal protection, because the government cannot or will not protect them from terrorism, crime, or other threats, are likely to avoid

paying taxes by engaging in black-market transactions. Because informal economies tend to be smaller and cruder than large-scale, regulated national and international markets, the economy in a castle society not only tends to shrink into a number of smaller, local economies, but also tends to regress from a more complex to a cruder form. This is what happened in the Dark Ages in Western Europe, when the Roman Empire was no longer able to control the incursions of barbarian tribes. It can happen in any society, no matter how advanced, when terrorism, crime, or other sources of disruption prevent a central government from policing its territory.

In an American garrison state, reluctantly but rationally, citizens would maintain their collective safety by sacrificing the American way of life to precautionary militarism. In an American tributary state, reluctantly but rationally, citizens would maintain their collective safety by sacrificing the American way of life to precautionary appeasement. In an American castle society, reluctantly but rationally, citizens would try to maintain their individual safety by sacrificing the American way of life to precautionary survivalism.

### The Garrison State as a Response to Foreign Threats

The term "garrison state" was coined by the American political scientist Harold Lasswell in 1941 to refer to a regime created voluntarily by a free people who sought safety by surrendering most of their liberty to a government strong enough to protect them.<sup>19</sup> Lasswell and many of his contemporaries feared that the safety of the United States and other nations in the atomic age might require the permanent surrender of personal and economic liberty to garrison states. An American garrison state would not be imposed on the American people, against their will, by a tyrant who had sprung up among them. The garrison state is not to be confused with an illegitimate Caesarist dictatorship. The American garrison state would be a legitimate system that would be constructed reluctantly but voluntarily by Americans who were convinced that the requirements of their basic security required a permanent state of preparation for total war against powerful enemies. Given a choice between survival and liberty, the American people would choose survival.

In demanding independence from Britain, Patrick Henry famously said, "Give me liberty or give me death." But most people would sacrifice liberty

in exchange for life, in the hope that liberty might be regained at some point in the future. And their decision would be justified. "Safety from external danger is the most powerful director of national conduct," Alexander Hamilton observed in the Federalist Papers. "Even the ardent love of liberty will, after a time, give way to its dictates. The violent destruction of life and property incident to war—the continual effort and alarm attendant on a state of continual danger, will compel nations the most attached to liberty, to resort for repose and security, to institutions, which have a tendency to destroy their civil and political rights. To be more safe they, at length, become willing to run the risk of being less free."<sup>20</sup>

Properly understood, the American tradition does not hold that republican liberalism is the best form of government in all countries in all circumstances. Republican liberalism is the best form of government when *internal and external conditions permit it to be established and maintained without sacrificing security*. In the words of the nineteenth-century American statesman John C. Calhoun, to the power of government "there must ever be allotted, under all circumstances, a sphere sufficiently large to protect the community against danger from without and violence and anarchy within. The residuum belongs to liberty. More cannot be safely or rightly allotted to it."<sup>21</sup> The limitation of danger is the precondition for the limitation of power that makes liberty possible.

In conditions of imminent foreign danger or internal chaos, an authoritarian regime might well be preferable to a republican liberal regime that cannot cope with the threats to the United States. It would be impossible for America's civilian and democratic institutions to function while atomic bombs were raining down on the country or while terrorists had shut down power grids nationwide. In such extreme national emergencies martial law might be necessary, at least for a time.

But authoritarian government, even if it were rational and adopted with the consent of the people in a brief or prolonged emergency, would be incompatible with America's republican constitution of government and its republican constitution of society alike. In wars and warlike conditions, the system of checks and balances tends not to function, because of the great augmentation of the powers of the president in the role of commander-in-chief. The separation of powers gives way to executive rule.

At the same time, the costs imposed on the economy by an enormous military weaken the middle class, the foundation of the republican social



constitution. It is not the rich, but the middle and working classes who are most likely to suffer, when resources are diverted from the civilian economy to the war economy. And it is not the rich, who can find ways to avoid combat, but the middle and working classes who are most likely to be conscripted by a draft. Even in the absence of a draft and even in the absence of actual war, a high degree of mobilization of the economy for military readiness has the potential to turn the United States from a middle-class republic into a bureaucratic garrison state.

### The Tributary State: Purchasing Safety with Appeasement

The tributary state is the opposite of the garrison state. A garrison state retains its sovereign independence from foreign control or intimidation by jettisoning liberty. By contrast, a tributary state retains the liberties of its citizens by sacrificing sovereign independence. The garrison state preserves one half of the republican liberal formula, the freedom of the state from other states or stateless groups, by sacrificing the other half, the relative freedom of the individual from the state. The tributary state does the opposite. The tributary state preserves one half of the republican liberal formula, the relative freedom of the individual from the state, by sacrificing the other half, the freedom of the state from other states or stateless groups.

The tributary state is familiar from history. Many weak countries have averted attack or conquest by bargaining with aggressors. In return for being allowed to preserve its internal autonomy and the way of life of its people, the tributary state may agree to defer to the aggressor in its foreign policy. Finland, during the Cold War, was a tributary state in this sense. Its combination of internal autonomy and external deference to the threatening Soviet Union became known as "Finlandization," another term for coerced appeasement.

A tributary state, as the name suggests, may pay tribute to an aggressor to avoid being attacked. The aggressors engaged in extorting tribute need not be governments. Stateless groups can extort tributary payments as well. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the United States along with the countries of Europe frequently paid ransoms to North African chiefs who kidnapped Western hostages. The line "to the shores of Tripoli"

in the United States Marines' Hymn—"From the halls of Montezuma / To the shores of Tripoli"—refers to a raid carried out by the Jefferson administration in 1805 when it broke with the previous U.S. policy of paying ransom to obtain the release of kidnapped Americans.

For a time, avoiding conflict by paying enemies or submitting to their demands in foreign policy may allow a civilian, liberal society to preserve its way of life as an alternative to sacrificing much of its economy and the liberty of its citizens to armed strength. But bargains between the extorted and the extorter are unstable. Success in extortion may lead the aggressor constantly to increase demands on the victim, forcing the choice between armed resistance and total subjugation that the policy of tribute had been adopted to avoid.

As President Franklin Roosevelt told the American people in December 1940: "Is it a negotiated peace if a gang of outlaws surrounds your community and on threat of extermination makes you pay tribute to save your skins? Such a dictated peace would be no peace at all."<sup>22</sup> Roosevelt repeated the point in his address to Congress in January 1941: "No realistic American can expect from a dictator's peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion—or even good business. Such a peace would bring no security for us or for our neighbors. Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."<sup>23</sup>

The term "Danegeld" refers to the gold that Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the Dark Ages paid to Danish Vikings to prevent them from raiding their territories. In his poem "Dane-geld" Rudyard Kipling wrote:

It is wrong to put temptation in the path of any nation,  
For fear they should succumb and go astray,  
So when you are requested to pay up or be molested,  
You will find it better policy to say:

"We never pay any one Dane-geld,  
No matter how trifling the cost,  
For the end of that game is oppression and shame,  
And the nation that plays it is lost!"<sup>24</sup>

## The Castle Society

While the garrison state is created by a public decision to sacrifice personal liberty to national sovereignty in the interest of public safety, and the tributary state is created by a public decision to sacrifice national sovereignty to personal liberty in the interest of public safety, the castle society is the result of countless private decisions by citizens to sacrifice both personal liberty and national sovereignty to personal safety.

In a castle society, the majority of the people have lost faith in the ability or willingness of the government to protect them from threats. The threat may be external, like foreign terrorists or invading armies or falling missiles or dangerous illegal immigrants, or the threat may be internal, like criminals or paramilitary gangs.

Examples of castle societies can be found abroad. Brazil and Mexico in many ways are castle societies, where rampant criminality forces those who can afford it to hide in fortress-like homes and pay for private security guards. At the end of the twentieth century Russia metamorphosed from a militarized despotism under communist rule into a castle society warped by high levels of crime. It went from tyranny to anarchy.

## Glimpses of the American Nightmare

In 1866 the U.S. Supreme Court, in a famous case called *Ex parte Milligan*, considered a death sentence given in 1864 to a Democratic politician from Ohio who had been found guilty of disloyalty by a military commission during the Civil War. The court overturned the death sentence and, in an opinion written by Justice David Davis, an ally whom Lincoln had appointed to the Supreme Court, repudiated the Lincoln administration's claims of essentially unlimited presidential power during wartime. Davis wrote: "Martial law, established on such a basis, destroys every guarantee of the Constitution . . . Civil liberty and this kind of martial law cannot endure together; the antagonism is irreconcilable; and, in the conflict, one or the other must perish." Justice Davis also rejected the argument that the Constitution was a charter for peaceful times only, and legitimately could be suspended in emergencies: "The Constitution of the United States is a law for rulers and people, equally in war and peace, and covers with the shield of its protection all classes of men, at all times, and under all circumstances.

No doctrine involving more pernicious consequences, was ever invented by the wit of man, than that any of its provisions can be suspended during any of the great exigencies of government."<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, Justice Davis may have been too optimistic. American history proves that constitutional safeguards are inadequate to preserve domestic freedom in times of war and international tension. The elaborate safeguards of the federal Constitution and the Bill of Rights did not stop Congress from enacting the repressive Alien and Sedition Acts in the 1790s, when Europe was consumed by war and many Americans feared that the revolutionary regime in France was trying to subvert the U.S. government. During the Civil War, the military arrested thousands of Americans, including some whose only crime was to have criticized the Lincoln administration; one anti-Lincoln member of Congress was deported to the Confederacy. Domestic Red Scares followed the Russian Revolution and the events of the early Cold War in the 1950s; German Americans were persecuted during World War I and Japanese Americans were interned in concentration camps during World War II. Although he was thwarted by the courts, President Truman claimed the power to nationalize the U.S. steel industry as a war measure during the Korean War. The FBI spied on Americans throughout the Cold War. Following the al-Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush violated the law by authorizing officials to spy on U.S. citizens without judicial warrants, established a system of concentration camps in Guantanamo, Cuba, Afghanistan, and Iraq, authorized or permitted the torture not only of suspected terrorists but also of U.S. prisoners of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and claimed the right to imprison any American citizen defined as an "enemy combatant" indefinitely, try him before a military tribunal rather than a civilian court, and execute him.

In most of these cases, once the initial panic subsided, the American people returned to their senses. The Supreme Court rejected the sweeping claims of the Lincoln administration, following the Civil War, and of the Bush administration in 2004, and decades after their internment Japanese Americans were compensated for their mistreatment. But the fact that this kind of justice is belated proves the point. During a moment of panic, the U.S. Constitution is likely to be no more than a few pieces of paper.

National leaders often share the panic of the public. Lincoln's Secretary of State William Seward, responsible for a time for overseeing the mass



imprisonment of dissenters during the Civil War, sincerely believed that the British and the Confederates controlled the opposition Democratic Party in the North. (Even paranoids have real enemies; Seward was injured, and Lincoln was killed, by pro-Southern conspirators.) Franklin Roosevelt feared that Germany and Japan had planted saboteurs and quislings throughout America; he was blind to the fact that two of his top aides, Harry Dexter White and Alger Hiss, had volunteered to be Soviet spies. Most wartime presidents have thought it less risky to do too much to crush potential threats than to do too little. And they have been forgiven. Lincoln and Roosevelt are justly considered to be among the greatest American presidents, notwithstanding the excessive violations of civil liberties they authorized.

James Madison observed, "[T]he fetters imposed on liberty at home have ever been forged out of the weapons provided for the defence against real, pretended, or imaginary dangers from abroad."<sup>26</sup> Note that Madison begins the list of occasions for despotism with real dangers, not pretended or imaginary ones. Dictatorship by default, in a situation of grave danger to the nation, is a greater threat to the American republic than dictatorship by design. Reluctant Caesarism, forced on a president by circumstances and approved by an anxious people, is more to be feared than the seizure of power by an ambitious tyrant.

Nor is the castle society completely foreign to the American experience. Something like a castle society has been created at different times by the lawlessness of the Western frontier—in big cities during the Prohibition era, and in inner cities where groups fought over the drug trade. At the height of the Cold War in the 1950s and early 1960s, some Americans prepared for the possibility of atomic war by building and stocking private bunkers for themselves and their families. In the last third of the twentieth century, a crime wave swept the United States, fed by the Baby Boom—youth bulge and the mass migration of impoverished immigrants to the United States. Many middle-class Americans abandoned the dangerous cities for the safer suburbs, where they sometimes bought guns for self-protection, fortified their homes with bars and burglar alarms, and paid for protection from private security companies. Following the attacks of September 11, physical barriers began to appear around public buildings and office towers, and ordinary citizens—sometimes at the urging of the Bush administration—began to stock

up on duct tape for poison gas attacks, emergency kits, food and water, and, in some cases, no doubt, guns. The every-household-for-itself logic of the castle society is far from unknown in the United States.

It is futile to expect freedom and democracy to survive unimpaired, if they survive at all, in prolonged conditions of acute national danger. The only certain way to preserve civil liberties in the United States is to make such moments of peril rare, and that can only be done by promoting a less dangerous international environment.

### The American Way of Strategy

The ultimate purpose of U.S. foreign policy is to create conditions favorable to the individualistic American way of life. The first line of defense of the American way of life is the democratic republic itself, with its two constitutions—the constitution of government, based on checks and balances, and the constitution of society, based on a propertied middle-class citizenry that possesses a significant degree of independence from the government.

The health of America's government constitution, no less than the health of its middle-class social constitution, requires conditions of external and internal order that minimize security costs, whether for soldiers or police. If the costs of security are too high, the limited state may give way to an unlimited state—the garrison state—or to a weak state, which engenders a castle society. Either means the end of the American dream and the American way of life.

The major external threats to both the American people and the American way of life are empire and anarchy. An imperial state conquers other states to add their populations, resources, and territories to its own, or accomplishes the same goals by intimidation without conquest. American security costs would be high in a world dominated by one or a few aggressive empires.

An anarchic state cannot govern its own territory and exports chaos to other countries. American security costs would be high in a world disrupted by terrorism, crime, piracy, uncontrolled immigration, cross-border epidemics and pollution, and other consequences of anarchy.

Empire is a threat when some states have too much illegitimate power. Anarchy is a threat when some states have too little legitimate power.

By themselves or in combination, empire and anarchy have the potential to frighten Americans into abandoning our democratic republic for another kind of political system. Putting our hopes for security in a far less limited government, we can create a garrison state that pursues a policy of precautionary militarism. Or we can seek to save limited government by creating a tributary state that pursues a policy of precautionary appeasement. Or, losing our faith in the ability of the government to protect us, we can engage in an every-household-for-itself scramble of precautionary survivalism, the result being a castle society.

It is not enough, then, for America's strategists to protect the American people from direct threats to their physical security. American strategists must also protect the American way of life by preventing the domination of the international system by imperial and militarist states and the disruption of the international system by anarchy. Even if empire or anarchy elsewhere do not kill any Americans, they may have the potential to kill the American way of life by making democratic republicanism incompatible with the nation's physical security and incompatible with independence from foreign domination or foreign chaos.

*The purpose of the American way of strategy is to defend the American way of life by means that do not endanger the American way of life.*