

Henry Kissinger



DOES AMERICA NEED A FOREIGN POLICY?

**Toward a Diplomacy for
the 21st Century**

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In this timely, thoughtful, and important book, at once far-seeing and brilliantly readable, America's most famous diplomatist explains why we urgently need a new and coherent foreign policy and what our foreign policy goals should be in the post-Cold War world of globalization.

Dr. Henry Kissinger covers the wide range of problems facing the United States at the beginning of a new millennium and a new presidency, with particular attention to such hot spots as Vladimir Putin's Russia, the new China, the globalized economy, and the demand for humanitarian intervention. He challenges Americans to understand that our foreign policy must be built upon America's permanent national interests, defining what these are, or should be, in the year 2001 and for the foreseeable future.

Here Dr. Kissinger shares with readers his insights into the foreign policy problems and opportunities that confront the United States today, including the challenge to conventional diplomacy posed by globalization, rapid capital movement, and instant communication; the challenge of modernizing China; the impact of Russia's precipitous decline from superpower status; the growing estrangement between the United States and Europe; the questions that arise from making "humanitarian intervention" a part of "the New Diplomacy"; and the prospect that America's transformation into the one remaining superpower and global leader may unite other countries against presumed imperial ambitions.

Viewing America's international position through the immediate lens of policy choices rather than from the distant hindsight of historical analysis, Dr. Kissinger takes an approach to the country's current role as the world's dominant power that offers both an invaluable perspective on the state of the Union in global affairs and a careful, detailed prescription on exactly how we must proceed.

In seven accessible chapters, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* provides a crystalline assessment of how the United States' ascendancy as the world's dominant presence in the twentieth century may be effectively reconciled with the urgent need in the

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twenty-first century to achieve a bold new world order. By examining America's present and future relations with Russia, China, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Asia, in conjunction with emerging concerns such as globalization, nuclear weapons proliferation, free trade, and the planet's eroding natural environment, Dr. Kissinger lays out a compelling and comprehensively drawn vision for American policy in approaching decades.



HENRY A. KISSINGER

was sworn in on September 22, 1973, as the fifty-sixth United States Secretary of State, a position he held until January 20, 1977. He also served as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from

January 20, 1969, until November 3, 1975. Among the awards Dr. Kissinger has received have been the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, the Presidential Medal of Freedom (the nation's highest civilian award) in 1977, and the Medal of Liberty in 1986.

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AMERICA AT THE APEX: EMPIRE OR LEADER?

“At the dawn of the new millennium, the United States is enjoying a preeminence unrivaled by even the greatest empires of the past. From weaponry to entrepreneurship, from science to technology, from higher education to popular culture, America exercises an unparalleled ascendancy around the globe. During the last decade of the twentieth century, America’s preponderant position rendered it the indispensable component of international stability. It mediated disputes in key trouble spots to the point that, in the Middle East, it had become an integral part of the peace process. So committed was the United States to this role that it almost ritually put itself forward as mediator, occasionally even when it was not invited by all the parties involved—as in the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan in July 1999. The United States considered itself both the source and the guarantor of democratic institutions around the globe, increasingly setting itself up as the judge of the fairness of foreign elections and applying economic sanctions or other pressures if its criteria were not met.

“ . . . In the Balkans, the United States is performing essentially the same functions as did the Austrian and Ottoman empires at the turn of the last century, of keeping the peace by establishing protectorates interposed between warring ethnic groups. It dominates the international financial system by providing the single largest pool of investment capital, the most attractive haven for investors, and the largest market for foreign exports. American popular culture sets standards of taste around the world even as it provides the occasional flash point for national resentments. . . .

“Ironically, America’s preeminence is often treated with indifference by its own people.” —from Henry Kissinger’s *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*

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IS THERE A ROAD OUT OF CHAOS?

PLAN COLOMBIA

Colombia is a country rife with ambiguity. It has a long history of uninterrupted democracy; for much of the last half-century, its leaders have been impeccably civilian and emerged from periodic elections though, for much of the period, the political parties have conspired to alternate in the exercise of power. Colombia also largely avoided the cycle of boom and bust afflicting its neighbors. Through prudent fiscal management, it essentially escaped the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s and required no restructuring of its international debt.

But Colombia also has a tradition of extreme violence. For the past half-century, it has found itself torn by a vicious civil war. Part of the reason for the endemic violence is that Colombia is highly heterogeneous. Different cultures in various parts of the country amount, in fact, to different societies: the highlands, where most of the people of European origin live; the coastal plains, inhabited by many of the descendants of slaves brought to the country in the nineteenth century; and the forested regions, where vestiges of the original Indian culture survive.

The civil war, originally started by radical Marxist groups, has merged with the narcotics industry, supplying much of the illegal drugs consumed in the United States. The narcotics producers finance the guerrillas who, in return for the weapons they are thus able to acquire, supply safe havens for narcotics production. As a result, the guerrillas are, in many respects, better financed than the government. The government has thus far been unable to break the resulting military stalemate; its frustrations have reached a point where it has granted the guerrillas safe havens. Parts of the country are thus, in effect, governed by radical groups determined to overthrow the central government and by narcotics producers openly flouting the national legislation.

In the process, Colombia finds itself trapped in the classic dilemma of guerrilla warfare. The guerrillas do not have to fight except when they are fairly sure they have the upper hand—especially when they operate out of safe havens. And they do not have to win

battles; their goal is to inflict casualties that will cumulatively sap the government's staying power and its base of political consent. Guerrillas generally win so long as they do not lose and, conversely, the government loses if it does not win—that is, if it does not destroy the guerrillas.

Historically, guerrilla wars, like civil wars, have ended either in total victory for one side or in the utter exhaustion of both sides. Negotiations between the parties almost never conclude in compromise—though they continue to rank as a favorite prescription of North American advisors urging “political” outcomes. Nor have they succeeded in Colombia despite the government's strenuous attempts and the extraordinary step of ceding substantial territory to the two major guerrilla bands.

All this has turned Colombia into the most menacing foreign policy challenge in Latin America for the United States. A collapse of governance threatens. Self-appointed paramilitaries are conducting open warfare against the guerrillas, and law and order is well on the way to a total breakdown. For the United States, the consequences of such an outcome would be grave. National disintegration in Colombia would be a body blow to the economic progress of the region, would generate a wave of refugees that would inevitably reach the shores of Colombia's neighbors and the United States, and would end even the limited measures of drug trafficking control that presently exist in the country. It would leave a radical Marxist government backed, at least for the moment, by narcotics money in the largest and most traditional nation in the Andes. This crisis is several orders of magnitude more serious than the instability in Haiti, which precipitated the Clinton administration's maladroit intervention, or in Panama, which triggered a military response by the George H. W. Bush administration.

There can be little question that the United States has an interest in the reestablishment of stability in Colombia. It should do what it can to help build a government there capable of enforcing its own laws against poppy and coca production, against drug processing plants, and against the elaborate transport systems devised to move drugs from Colombia for distribution and consumption in

the United States. This is why, in its last months, the Clinton administration put forward, under the slogan "Plan Colombia," a program of major assistance. A projected \$1.2 billion is to be spent for advanced helicopters and other equipment, with American advisors training Colombian officers for fighting the guerrilla war. The purpose is to destroy the drug segment of the guerrilla movement, leaving the guerrillas either to wither away or negotiate their way out.

Unfortunately, the almost exclusive emphasis of Plan Colombia on a military solution virtually invites failure. To assist the Colombian government to assert its own authority over the drug-producing guerrilla areas, to control the processing and transport systems, and to win the triangular war with the guerrillas and the paramilitary forces, much more is needed than attack helicopters and a handful of battalions of troops subjected to a short course of American instruction. The drug growers, largely small dirt farmers, must be given wider opportunities for alternative crops. United States assistance to Colombia for alternative agriculture has been pitifully small compared to the military aid. Yet it is the economic desperation of the Colombian farmer that makes him an easy target for the drug producers.

Then, too, the right-wing paramilitary organizations must be brought to heel. The human rights of those living in the zones of violence must be protected not only from the guerrillas but also from the self-appointed private security forces that justify their existence by the ineffectiveness of governmental policing and security forces. Wholesale reform of the institutions of criminal justice is essential.

In these circumstances, Plan Colombia bears within it the same fateful momentum which drove America's engagement in Vietnam first to stalemate and then to frustration: at the outset, the United States limits its involvement to training and the provision of vital military equipment—in this case, large attack helicopters. But once the effort goes beyond a certain point, the United States, to avoid the collapse of the local forces in which it has invested such prestige and treasure, will be driven to take the field itself.

When the stakes are this high, it is dangerous to undertake the enterprise without the support of at least some of the major Latin American countries. Hemispheric cooperation, however, has been sorely lacking with respect to Plan Colombia. Under Hugo Chávez, Venezuela, which has a long frontier with Colombia, sympathizes with the radical guerrillas and opposes even an indirect American presence near its borders. Brazil, with another long border, has so far been noncommittal with respect to the U.S. role. Peru and Ecuador are too preoccupied with their domestic problems to lend active assistance. Colombia's neighbors generally fear the plan's success almost as much as its failure. They are concerned that, if the narcotics industry is pushed out of Colombia, it will move into Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil and protect the coca crops with its own armed forces which then will turn into guerrilla movements. Many of them fear a leftist government in Bogotá more tolerant of the drug cartel less than they do narcotics centers on their own soil.

As an alibi for their reluctance to cooperate, the Latin American governments tend to cite U.S. hypocrisy, claiming that the United States is more prepared to fight the drug war on foreign soil than to curb its domestic consumption. Latin America's criticisms of the U.S. emphasis on the problem of supply have merit, as does its emphasis on the shortcomings of the United States's domestic war on drugs. Yet this does not alter the reality that the effect of the drug culture is even more corrosive in Latin America than in the United States. In highly centralized systems like those of Latin America, corruption associated with the drug trade inevitably reaches high government officials and the criminal justice system. In a decentralized system like that of the United States, corruption focuses on the local level. In Latin America, the trade in illegal drugs is politically destabilizing; in the United States, it is a political embarrassment and a social crisis. Nevertheless, both regions will pay an enormous price—not the least of which will be the corrosive influence on the bilateral relationship—if the problem is not dealt with cooperatively.

The new administration has no more important task than to ob-

tain Latin American cooperation for a program which combines the military aspects of Plan Colombia with a farsighted social program of agricultural and judicial reform. An important first step is the expanded cooperation between Mexico and the United States in stemming the flow of drugs from Colombia through Mexico to the United States. As Mexican President Vicente Fox has stated, this program of cooperative control could be extended to Central America and Colombia. The other countries, especially Colombia's neighbors, should grasp the fact that they will not be able to avoid the growing danger of the Colombian government disintegrating or losing control over more and more of its countryside. At some point, it may conclude that it has no alternative but to negotiate an agreement with the guerrillas that will become the final step on the road to losing control altogether. And the impact of such a collapse and the emergence of a radical government financed by drug money would prove devastating to other countries in the region.

The decision of the Clinton administration to resist such an outcome, unilaterally if necessary, is understandable. But so is the concern of those who see the same danger looming at the end of a prolonged and inconclusive anti-guerrilla/anti-drug effort. As someone who served in an administration which inherited a stalemated war in Vietnam, begun as an effort to use American technology to defeat indigenous guerrillas, I am perhaps excessively sensitive to the prospect of a conflict launched with noble motives but likely to end in stalemate, disillusionment, and an even greater threat to stability and security.

The military aspect of Plan Colombia and its unilateral execution by the United States is at best a way to buy time for a hemispheric, multilateral social and political program. But what if the Latin American countries refuse to go along? Given the importance of Colombia and the dangers associated with its collapse, a substantial assistance program is appropriate. But the United States must not cross the line to an advisory effort that makes it a participant in the conflict. Training of Colombian military personnel should take place in the United States or at nearby bases, for example, in Panama. The purposes and equally the limits of such a pro-

gram need to be clearly defined. And the inevitable national debate must be conducted with some understanding of local realities, especially since guerrilla groups have learned to exploit Western human rights concerns to trigger intervention (as in Kosovo) or to induce withdrawal (as in Vietnam).

Before the United States becomes too deeply enmeshed unilaterally, the new administration should define its objectives: Are they stabilization of the military situation or victory? And what is the difference? What is the danger that military stabilization is the prelude to a prolonged defeat? If victory is the objective, what is its definition, how long will it take, and what effort will it require? How far can we go alone? Above all, the administration must explain to the public what it faces, lest we drift into decisions on a largely tactical basis that permit neither success nor extrication.

THE PROMISE OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Ironically, President Clinton, whose frantic quest for a foreign policy legacy shadowed his last months in office, may well have created his most enduring legacy in the early months of his presidency when he gave his support to free trade in the Americas. In 1993, Clinton shepherded through Congress the ratification of NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement embracing Canada, Mexico, and the United States—that had been negotiated during the terms of his predecessors.

NAFTA has proved to be of lasting benefit to each of the partners. United States trade with Mexico exceeds trade with Japan and with all of Europe. Over 70 percent of Mexico's exports goes to the United States. The access to the North American market that NAFTA guaranteed has encouraged a substantial influx of fresh capital into the country. This trend would surely be repeated elsewhere if free trade between the NAFTA countries and Latin America were implemented. NAFTA was a crowning achievement of foreign policy, especially if its principles can now be extended to embrace the rest of the hemisphere.

In a seminal speech to the December 1994 Miami summit, Pres-