



# A Global Good Neighbor Ethic for International Relations

By Tom Barry, Salih Booker, Laura Carlsen, Marie Dennis, and John Gershman

## What in the world are we doing?

Seldom, if ever, has U.S. foreign policy been as confusing or as divisive as it is today. The occupation of Iraq, the deepening trade deficit, saber-rattling abroad, and disdain for international cooperation have left the American public uncertain about what exactly the U.S. government is doing overseas, and why.

The George W. Bush administration has reoriented the nation's foreign policy through its doctrine of preventive war and its ideological mission to export "freedom." Rather than building broad consensus after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the administration has polarized the citizenry.

Public uncertainty about *what in the world we are doing* is not a new phenomenon, certainly not one that's distinctive to the George W. Bush era. The U.S. public has frequently questioned whether Washington's foreign policy really serves U.S. interests and truly makes us more secure. These concerns have long shadowed foreign policy, especially since the 1890s when our revolutionary republic began thinking more about expanding the U.S. dominion abroad—and less about its own independence, democracy, and freedom.

Today the "global war on terror" and talk of "regime change" in other countries have sparked criticism from both the political left and right, and many voices have risen to protest these initiatives and demand a change in foreign policy. The president says we

should "stay the course." But the high costs, scant results, and increasing dangers of our current foreign policy course indicate the need for a sharp change in direction.

## Can we alter the course of U.S. foreign policy?

### Has there ever been a model for a dramatic shift away from militarism and unilateralism toward international cooperation and peace?

The answer to these questions is yes.

Fortunately, U.S. foreign policy has another legacy—one that makes us proud and can serve as a model and inspiration for ourselves and others. It is the Good Neighbor policy that President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed in the 1930s as a fresh perspective on international relations and U.S. foreign affairs. The Good Neighbor policy of the Roosevelt presidency (1933-1945) marked a dramatic shift in U.S. foreign relations, characterized by a public repudiation of three decades of imperialism, cultural and racial stereotyping, and military intervention.

In the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) is remembered mostly for his social democratic policies at home and his strong leadership as a wartime president. However, Roosevelt's pre-World War II foreign policy was equally outstanding and quite relevant to today's economic, security, and cultural conflicts.



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*Colonel Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders in Cuba during the Spanish-American War.*

In his March 1933 inaugural address, Roosevelt announced a new approach to international relations that would become known as his Good Neighbor policy. “I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others.”

In keeping with this new vision of international relations and U.S. foreign policy, FDR proclaimed that every nation should be “the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.”

#### **Can such a sweeping reversal be replicated?**

If history is a guide, then again the answer is yes.

In the late 1920s, U.S. citizens began to seriously question the wisdom of the nation’s foreign policy. Their critique went beyond a particular president or political party to encompass a foreign policy course set since the 1890s by both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Both sides of the political spectrum charged that the U.S. practice of policing other countries, restructuring foreign economies, and installing new governments ran counter to the country’s revolutionary ideals. After

three decades of mimicking European imperialism, U.S. government officials in the Departments of State, Commerce, and War had determined that a major change in foreign policy was necessary.

Reacting to popular protest and rising concern from business, Washington and Wall Street began to turn away from territorial acquisition and imperialism. Instead of seeing U.S. foreign policy as part of the mission of the “master race” to manage the affairs of the “weaker races,” the new talk in politics and commerce was about the need for nations to be good neighbors.

U.S. foreign policy is once again at a crossroads, and to proceed on the present course could be disastrous. To find a way out of this dilemma, it’s helpful to look back at the lessons from the interwar period.

The Good Neighbor Policy of the 1930s provides inspiration for another approach to international relations—not a radically different one, but one deeply rooted in our own history.

Our world has seen major transformations unimagined in the days of the Great Depression and the New Deal. As national and global conditions change, political agendas must also evolve. FDR’s Good Neighbor policy cannot be applied as a blueprint for foreign policy today, but the basic principles behind it offer keys to building new international relations that are socially, politically, and environmentally sustainable.

The principles of a new Global Good Neighbor ethic build on the best practices and policies of the Roosevelt years. Like FDR’s international relations initiatives, they break with the traditions of the foreign policy elites and emulate the practices of towns, communities, and neighborhoods across our land.

Global Good Neighbor principles are easily understood, because they are not drawn from foreign policy journals or ideological tracts. These principles reflect our basic values, our golden rules, our personal responsibility, our common sense, and our human decency. They are principles based on the everyday practices of good neighbors.

The following outline of a Global Good Neighbor ethic for our time consists of four general principles and three precepts that address the primary areas of international relations: defense policy, sustainable development, and governance.

**Principle One:** The first step toward being a good neighbor is to stop being a bad neighbor.

**Principle Two:** Our nation's foreign policy agenda must be tied to broad U.S. interests. To be effective and win public support, a new foreign policy agenda must work in tandem with domestic policy reforms to improve security, quality of life, and basic rights in our own country.

**Principle Three:** Given that our national interests, security, and social well-being are interconnected to those of other peoples, U.S. foreign policy must be based on reciprocity rather than domination, mutual well-being rather than cutthroat competition, and cooperation rather than confrontation.

**Principle Four:** As the world's foremost power, the United States will be best served by exercising responsible global leadership and partnership rather than seeking global dominance.

**Principle Five:** An effective security policy must be two-pronged. Genuine national safety requires both a well-prepared military capable of repelling attacks on our country and a proactive commitment to improving national and personal security through nonmilitary measures and international cooperation.

**Principle Six:** The U.S. government should support sustainable development, first at home and then abroad, through its macroeconomic, trade, investment, and aid policies.

**Principle Seven:** A peaceful and prosperous global neighborhood depends on effective governance at national, regional, and international levels. Effective governance is accountable, transparent, and representative.

## Cold War Evolution of U.S. Foreign Policy



The bold idea that the United States should conduct its foreign policy as if it were a good neighbor living in a global neighborhood of diverse cultures and politics was never resurrected after the FDR era. Shortly after World War II, the Cold War logic of permanent confrontation set in. Even during lulls in the Cold War or in its peacetime aftermath, the model of the Good Neighbor policy remained forgotten.

Over nearly five decades of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy elites mobilized public and government support for international intervention by stirring up fear and hatred of the Soviet Union and communism. Much of this was alarmist propaganda. Exaggerated “threat assessments” of the security risks posed by communist countries and organizations became the tool of choice for justifying a series of massive increases in the post-war military budget.

All members of the foreign policy community, regardless of political inclinations, found the sudden loss of the Cold War backdrop disorienting. Both those who had urged the government to adopt even stronger anti-communist measures and those who rallied against Cold War policies of U.S. intervention abroad were forced to abruptly readjust their lenses.

After the Soviet Union's collapse, it wasn't just a skeptical public but the entire foreign policy establishment that was asking, “What in the world are we doing?” Without the “evil empire” as an enemy, foreign policy analysts, think tanks, pundits, and government officials were left confused and seeking a new point of departure for U.S. foreign policy.

Strategists and theorists across the political spectrum searched for a new framework to guide post-Cold War foreign and military policy. In their search, the legacy of FDR's common-sense approach—embodying mutual respect and good neighbor values as a framework for international relations—was once again passed over.

In the 1990s, the dominant sector of the foreign policy elite regarded the global neighborhood as a mutually beneficial mix of producers, traders, investors, and consumers. Progressives talked enthusiastically of a “peace dividend” to channel funds from defense to social pro-



*Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the broadcast of one of his fireside chats in 1935.*

grams. However, others began casting about for a new bogeyman to justify a high military budget and to rally public support for U.S. military deployments in various parts of the world. The threat of “rogue states” became a common refrain.

Different ways of understanding the world—and the U.S. role in it—competed for prominence in Washington. One tendency emerging from the Pentagon and the State Department advocated expanding the definition of U.S. national security to include so-called “nontraditional threats” such as climate change, drug trafficking, failed states, and global health pandemics. Many liberals and progressives praised the new strategy for what they perceived as its proactive role in international affairs and supported more multilateral and U.S. responses to nontraditional threats, humanitarian intervention in internal conflicts, and trade liberalization. Others, mainly on the right, charged that the expanded definition led the nation into foolishly involving U.S. troops in civil conflicts abroad.

Within the Republican Party, a coalition of hawks, social conservatives, and neoconservatives set about fashioning a new foreign policy based on the concept of U.S. supremacy. They asserted that what the world needed for peace and stability was an arbiter with the over-

whelming military power and the necessary political will to enforce order. The United States, with its military superiority and historic precedents of global leadership, was the Leviathan that could and would lay the foundations for a “new American century.”

In the late 1990s, the Project for the New American Century and the American Enterprise Institute proposed a foreign policy blueprint for the post-Cold War era. Their plan stipulates that the United States should use its supreme military power in the service of its “moral clarity.” These groups contend that Washington has a moral responsibility to use U.S. power to maintain global order by crushing challenges to that order, and by taming tumultuous regions such as the Middle East by fostering democratic and economic transitions.

The adherents of this Pax Americana vision, who later would occupy the highest levels of the Bush administration, dismissed the “liberal” and “naive” notions that international cooperation and mutual respect were the best way to guarantee a safe and healthy global neighborhood. They argued that such views were tantamount to appeasement, and held the United States hostage to the opinions of an unreliable and envious international community. In their view, the forces of evil and social anarchy always preyed on hapless good neighbors and “appeasers.”

From the first days of the George W. Bush administration, the talk in Washington shifted away from “international cooperation,” “constructive engagement,” and “international community” to “regime change,” “preventive war,” “coalitions of the willing,” and “American supremacy.” International treaties, norms, and conventions were rejected, violated, and dismissed because they purportedly undermined U.S. power and foiled America’s “mission.”

After the Sept. 11 attacks, the U.S. government fervently donned the mantle of righteousness. Washington knows best, administration officials argued, not only for U.S. society but for other nations and global society as well. At home, policies included the suppression of civil liberties in the name of security, as embodied in the U.S. Patriot Act, and social policy reforms overtly driven by fundamentalist religious precepts. Abroad, preventive war, global policing, and political restructuring became the operative concepts for a harmonic world order—a Pax Americana that would benefit everyone but the “evildoers.”



However, the actions spawned by this vision have not led to world order or a new domestic consensus. The U.S. “mission” to recreate the world in its image has led to animosity and resentment among foreign governments and populations. Where once there was a broad domestic consensus to fight terrorism and defend the nation, now there are deepening questions and doubts about the “global war on terror.”

Were there any real links between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda? If not, why did Washington channel U.S. troops and resources into invading Iraq when Osama bin Laden remained at large? Why do U.S. troops continue to occupy Iraq after succeeding in bringing about “regime change” and failing to find any weapons of mass destruction (WMD)? Why do U.S. leaders spotlight possible nuclear weapons threats in Iran and North Korea while downplaying the actual nuclear weapons threats posed by U.S. “allies” in Pakistan and Israel?

*“I would dedicate this nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others.”*

—Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
March 1933

Many such concerns crosscut traditional labels and political schools of thought. Liberals attack the Bush policies as too conservative, citing militarism and a disdain for international cooperation. Traditional conservatives charge that the administration’s policies follow liberal lines, with their call for larger government, democracy promotion, and busy-body interventionism.

But a new public consensus is emerging that, by its actions and arrogance, the U.S. government is stirring up dangerous discord and precipitating disintegration in international relations. In doing so, current U.S. leaders are jeopardizing America’s future.

## Global Good Neighbor Principles

What is needed is a new approach that makes sense to the U.S. public, not just to foreign policy elites. It must be an approach that draws on the best of America’s values and traditions. As such, it must be based not on arrogance and materialism but on civic pride and generosity; not on a unilateral sense of “mission” but on a collaborative role as global partner.

The U.S. citizenry needs and deserves a new foreign policy that clarifies rather than confounds values—one that breaks through the barricades established by outdated political labels of conservative vs. liberal, realist vs. idealist, or isolationist vs. internationalist.

An effective policy will be neither strictly self-serving nor purely altruistic. In adopting Global Good Neighbor principles to guide our relations with other nations and peoples, we reject the false dichotomy between what’s good for the United States and what’s good for the world. As Roosevelt underscored in his 1933 inaugural address, good foreign relations are based on self-respect. No matter how well-intentioned the motives, no matter how inspiring the rhetoric, a foreign policy that lacks firm footings at home is flawed.

We have moved beyond the age when international relations were the exclusive domain of governments. The global neighborhood we live in is shaped by flows of people, ideas, germs, trade, and investment—exchanges in which states are sometimes marginal actors at most. Although critical aspects of foreign policy are still the primary purview of states, we are all active stakeholders.

Foreign policy is enacted by governments, but the ethic of a Global Good Neighbor extends beyond the realm of government. In this increasingly interconnected world, individuals, communities, churches, organizations, and corporations have a role to play in forging international relations. Good neighbor practices apply whether we operate a business, purchase goods, travel, or share the planet’s resources. What follows is a set of seven basic principles for a Global Good Neighbor ethic of international relations.

## U.S. Imperialism, Then and Now

In the late 19th century, our adolescent republic openly adopted the imperial “white man’s burden.” The captains of industry, political party chieftains, and media barons had long regarded the Old World nations with contempt. In the 1890s, however, they decided that for the U.S. to mature as an emerging great power it must follow the European imperial model. That meant ensuring control of the seas with an expanded Navy, adding new territories to the U.S. realm, and muscling the old powers out of America’s path to global greatness.

After conquering the Western frontier, forcibly acquiring huge stretches of northern Mexico, and decimating our country’s native population, U.S. politicians, private adventurers, and businessmen decided it was time to move on. Setting their sights beyond previous U.S. “manifest destiny” toward expanding the nation’s “natural” continental boundaries still further, they now gazed longingly out into the global arena.

Their imperialist, bad neighbor policies were sold to the public under the guise of doing the work of God. Addressing a group of clergymen in 1899, President William McKinley said: “[I] went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance [before making the decision to acquire the Philippines as a U.S. colony. Then the decision] came to me [after I suddenly realized] that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them. . . . And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department, and told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States.”

Foreshadowing the current doctrine of preventive war, President “Teddy” Roosevelt (1901-09) asserted in 1904 that the Anglo-American civilization in the Western Hemisphere had a moral obligation to resort to “the exercise of an international police power . . . in flagrant cases of wrong-doing and impotence.” Between the early 1890s and 1933, the U.S. intervened militarily 23 times in the Western Hemisphere.

Racism and a strong sense of cultural supremacy pervaded U.S. society during what became known as the Imperial Era. Even so, interventions abroad and new concepts of U.S. hegemony did provoke a public outcry. Some of the country’s most prominent intellectuals, activists, and artists dissented from the government’s drive to war and expan-

sionism during America’s Imperial Era. Included among the anti-war voices were such enduring figures as Mark Twain, Helen Keller, Jack London, John Dos Passos, W.E.B. Dubois, Eugene Debs, Emma Goldman, Ernest Hemingway, Upton Sinclair, Jack Reed, and Mary Harris (“Mother Jones”).

Mark Twain, vice president of the Anti-Imperialist League in 1900, wrote with bitter sarcasm following the invasion of the Philippines: “We have pacified some thousands of islanders and buried them . . . And so by these Providences of God—and the phrase is the government’s, not mine—we are a World Power.”

Women leaders of the suffrage movement noted the stark contradictions between U.S. efforts to carry civilization abroad and the injustices deeply ingrained in the fabric of U.S. society. Across the country, African-American ministers and leaders publicly rejected the imperialism peddled by the U.S. government and business community. W.E.B. Dubois voiced the revulsion of black people to “the recent course of the United States toward weaker and darker peoples in the West Indies, Hawaii, and the Philippines.” After participating in military interventions in seven countries Marine General Smedley Butler compared U.S. imperialism to a criminal racket, writing: “Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.”

Many of these criticisms are echoed in protests over U.S. foreign policy today. These historical figures were asking what in the world we were doing—and why a nation conceived in a struggle against imperialism, opposing state religion, and for self-determination had suddenly placed itself squarely on the other side.

Recently President Bush confided that U.S. history in the Philippines was a “model” for the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Is this the type of model that revolutionaries like Tom Paine envisioned for the newly independent United States of America? In *Common Sense*, his 1776 manifesto for reason and revolution, Paine wrote: “The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind.” However, by becoming an arrogant and capricious superpower, America risks losing its moral verve and abdicating its role as a model for other nations struggling for peace, freedom, and dignity.

## PRINCIPLE ONE

# 1

The first step toward being a good neighbor is to stop being a bad neighbor.

Like the medical ethic emphasizing that the first responsibility of a physician is “to do no harm,” being a good global neighbor means ending bad neighbor behavior. The admonition “to do no harm” applies to the foreign policies of all nations, but it is especially relevant to great powers like the United States that have a global reach and a history of bad neighbor practices.

The Roosevelt administration went a long way toward becoming a good global neighbor by ending U.S. military interventions and occupations as well as halting coercive Dollar Diplomacy and Gunboat Diplomacy. At home, it actively sought to weed out the attitudes of racism, moral superiority, and cultural chauvinism that had been cultivated during the previous period of overt imperialism.

The basic rules of peaceful coexistence and community are the same locally and globally. Bad neighbors use greater power and wealth to intimidate others. They apply a double standard delineating their behavior from that of their neighbors, setting themselves apart from their community. Good neighbors do not dictate to others how to live their lives. Instead, they respect differences and diversity in the neighborhood.

The United States is currently reviving some of its worst *bad neighbor* practices. Invading and occupying Iraq, renouncing membership in the International Criminal Court, meddling in Venezuela’s internal affairs, underwriting armed conflict in Colombia, backing fundamentalists in Israel, and reinforcing trade and travel barriers toward Cuba are all policies of a bad global neighbor.

Ending bad neighbor practices would create greater fiscal responsibility in government. At a time of record deficits, the country needs to halt the enormous drain of U.S. financial and human resources into wars, military occupations, and programs to militarize other countries.



*Government school lunch program launched as part of New Deal.*

## PRINCIPLE TWO

# 2

Our nation’s foreign policy agenda must be tied to broad U.S. interests. To be effective and win public support, a new foreign policy agenda must work in tandem with domestic policy reforms to improve security, quality of life, and basic rights in our own country.

Roosevelt had his priorities right. During his 1932 election campaign, he outlined his proposals for a Good Neighbor policy of international relations. But FDR promised that his first priority would be freeing the United States from economic stagnation and deepening social desperation.

In 1932 Roosevelt pledged a “new deal” for the American people and declared that the “primary task is to put people to work.” Consistent with his new policy agenda both at home and abroad, restoration of the health of the United States would depend not merely on



monetary gain but on applying noble social values. To put the country back to work, Roosevelt promised policies that would provide “a strict supervision of all banking and credits” and “an end to speculation.”

The New Deal provided jobs and social security through a package of social democratic reforms that are as relevant today as they were in the 1930s. But the New Deal was more than a social welfare program. It also sought to restrain the unbridled market forces that led to the Great Depression, and it endeavored to manage the economy to assure a baseline standard of living for every member of society. For the Roosevelt administration, U.S. national interests were not regarded as the aspirations of Wall Street and Corporate America. Rather, they were redefined to reflect the interests of Main Street and working America.

The New Deal policy agenda restated the country’s moral creed away from an emphasis on accumulation of wealth and toward collective well-being. In his inaugural address, Roosevelt echoed the popular rage against “the money changers” who occupied “the high seats of our civilization.” Cautioning against joining “in the mad chase of evanescent profits,” Roosevelt posited that “happiness lies not in the mere possession of money” but rather “in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort.”

Together, the New Deal package of domestic reforms and the Good Neighbor policy of international relations gave our parents and grandparents a renewed sense of self-respect.

Now, as then, a Global Good Neighbor ethic cannot be detached from the need for domestic policy reform. To advance a foreign policy that addresses the problems of the global neighborhood, we must halt the deterioration of conditions at home. In the United States today, real wages are stagnating. While the wealthiest 10% register income increases, benefits for most Americans are being slashed, social safety net programs are disintegrating, and health costs are rising. As a result, the country is losing its sense of hope and determination to create a better life.

In this context, the definition of “U.S. interests” requires a major overhaul. Current foreign and domestic policies represent interests that diverge sharply from the welfare of the common citizen. They are policies that favor nar-

row economic interests and define U.S. national security as asserting U.S. military power.

National interests that respond only to the corporate bottom line betray the welfare of the common citizen and erode the basic principles of good neighborliness. A foreign policy that equates the objectives of Wal-Mart, Exxon/Mobil, Halliburton, and Lockheed Martin with U.S. national interest is badly askew.

The course of U.S. international engagement is charted not just by what the government defines as U.S. national interest and security needs, but also by the dominant ideologies and cultural values that shape domestic politics and by influential ethnic, business, and country-specific lobbies. A redefinition of U.S. interests must come from a change in values along the lines that FDR proposed coupled with a reining in of special interest groups that exercise preponderant influence in defining the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

A major challenge facing the proponents of a Global Good Neighbor ethic is to ensure that the domestic forces influencing foreign policy share basic good neighbor principles of mutual respect and recognize that we live in an increasingly interconnected world. As we clean up our own house, we create the foundations for a foreign policy that works through example, not by imposing norms that we ourselves do not always follow.

A new foreign policy agenda must be tied to tangible U.S. interests and redefined with an emphasis on the common man and woman. There is no place for messianic missions or the hidden agendas of the business and political elites.

Although social, economic, and political conditions at home are not the same as they were in the 1930s, there are many similarities, including increasing social desperation, financial speculation, and corporate greed. As in the 1930s, a new set of domestic and foreign policies must reorient goals to foster genuine well-being, vest all citizens in our political system, and halt the excesses of big business.

In a phrase, it is time to recommit ourselves to what the signatories of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 called the “inalienable rights” of all peoples to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Our long-term interests require a new equilibrium between what’s good for the few and what assures a high quality of life for our children and our children’s children.



## PRINCIPLE THREE

# 3

Given that our national interests, security, and social well-being are interconnected to those of other peoples, U.S. foreign policy must be based on reciprocity rather than domination, mutual well-being rather than cutthroat competition, and cooperation rather than confrontation.

A Global Good Neighbor ethic recognizes that the interests of U.S. citizens are inextricably bound to those of other nations and peoples. Though putting our own house in order is an important step toward being a good global neighbor, international action is also crucial to problem solving. As Roosevelt cautioned, “national recovery is not narrowly nationalistic.”

FDR considered “narrow nationalism” a failure to recognize increasing “interdependence.” Speaking of the need for an international good neighbor ethic, Roosevelt said, “If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence with each other—that we cannot merely take but we must give as well.”

Seven decades ago, as the nation faced despair at home and gathering war parties abroad, FDR perceived that U.S. welfare and security were inseparable from the welfare and security of others. This vision of the world is all the more apt today. Many of the social, economic, and cultural problems faced by the United States and other countries transcend national boundaries. The rapid pace of global economic integration and the development of communications technologies closely link people everywhere. A salutary result is an emerging sense of international community, but global integration also means shared problems.

In Roosevelt’s day, when leaders spoke in terms of “international community” and global interdependence, they were referring mostly to trade relations and military concerns. Today, however, any reflection on global interdependence invariably leads to consideration of an array of transnational challenges that weren’t part of the conventional foreign policy discourse of the mid-20th



*Darfurian family in a Sudanese refugee camp.*

century. We now must rely on each other to solve planetary problems such as climate change, public health pandemics, population displacement, international criminal and terrorist networks, and cultural clashes. Increasingly we are also linked because we buy the same product brands, listen to the same music, and work for the same transnational corporations.

With daily life taking on transnational characteristics, citizens can lead the way in becoming global good neighbors. We cannot expect our political representatives to be guided by the principle of global cooperation if we as consumers, church members, entrepreneurs, and community members don’t integrate this precept into our actions and attitudes.

At its core, a Global Good Neighbor policy is based on personal responsibility. It brings foreign policy down to the level of the public by emphasizing our connectedness—not only through shared threats but also through the possibility of shared solutions.

## A History to Make Us Proud

Franklin D. Roosevelt's view of international relations was a startling departure from the ideological frameworks that previously dominated foreign policy discourse. His perspectives on how nations should behave appealed to both common sense and moral values.

Two months after he moved into the White House, FDR promised to help "spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power, and all the other expedients."

To replace the prevailing system, Roosevelt charted a new course, guided by international cooperation. "Common ideals and a community of interest, together with a spirit of cooperation, have led to the realization that the well-being of one nation depends in large measure upon the well-being of its neighbors," the new president asserted.

For Roosevelt, being a good global neighbor meant promoting peace and deglorifying war. "I hate war," lamented Roosevelt during one address to the nation. "I have seen war on land and sea. I have seen blood running from the wounded. I have seen men coughing out their gassed lungs. ... I have seen children starving. I have seen the agony of mothers and wives."

Roosevelt repeatedly alerted the nation about the rise of fascism and the new imperial ambitions of Germany and Japan. "We are not isolationists," said FDR, "except in so far as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war. Yet we must remember that so long as war exists on earth there will be some danger that even the nation which most ardently desires peace may be drawn into war."

As World War II loomed, Roosevelt began establishing the bases for a foreign policy doctrine of nonaggression and demilitarization to ensure that the United States did not precipitate wars, as it had in the recent past with Spain and Mexico. "We seek to dominate no other nation," he declared. "We ask no territorial expansion. We oppose imperialism. We desire reduction in world armaments."

Being a good neighbor had economic implications as well as security ones. FDR believed that protective economic blocs and the mercantilism of the great powers led not only to economic ruin but to armed clashes, as competing states sought to protect their foreign markets. "We do not maintain that a more liberal international trade will stop war,"

said Roosevelt, "but we fear that without a more liberal international trade, war is a natural consequence."

Commenting in 1936 about why his Good Neighbor policy was first applied in U.S. relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, Roosevelt explained: "Peace, like charity, begins at home. That is why we have begun at home. But peace in the Western world is not all that we seek. It is our hope that knowledge of the practical application of the good neighbor policy in this hemisphere will be borne home to our neighbors across the seas."

While building the foundations for peace, FDR was not afraid to exercise strong national, regional, and global leadership in military matters. In the years leading up to the U.S. declaration of war on the Axis powers, both right-wing and left-wing isolationists criticized Roosevelt for involving the country in "entangling alliances" with nonfascist European powers.

Roosevelt eventually unified the nation in the war against Germany, Italy, and Japan. Yet while presiding over the pre-war military buildup and even during the war itself, FDR vigorously condemned what President Dwight Eisenhower would later call the "military-industrial complex." In one of his Fireside Chats with national radio listeners, Roosevelt in 1940 warned that a "common sense of decency" demanded "that no new group of war millionaires shall come into being in this nation as a result of the struggle abroad." Four years later, in his State of the Union Address, Roosevelt lambasted "selfish pressure groups who seek to feather their nests while young Americans are dying." Such language would be welcome today.

FDR and his influential wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, were visionaries and global leaders. Most people remember FDR for his wartime leadership and his New Deal policies, while Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy stems from her advocacy for treaties creating new international norms regarding political, social, and economic rights. Mrs. Roosevelt also helped organize a wartime movement of peace, religious, and women's organizations to press for a postwar order that prioritized peace, equitable development, decolonization, and international cooperation. In doing so, she helped pave the way for the founding of the United Nations.

## PRINCIPLE FOUR

# 4

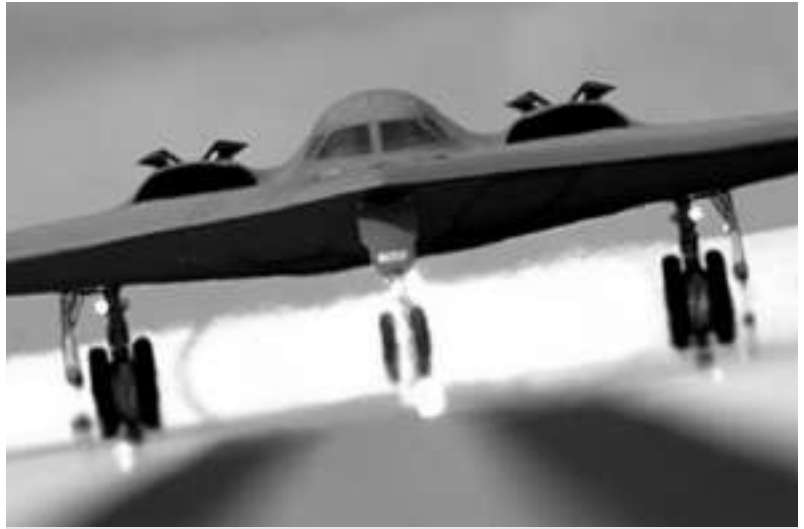
As the world's foremost power, the United States will be best served by responsible global leadership and partnership rather than seeking global dominance.

The United States faces a fateful choice. We can brandish our power as a bully or use our influence as a responsible community leader.

Currently, our nation has unparalleled military might, spending nearly as much as the rest of the world combined on weapons and troops. No other country can seriously challenge our military might. China, often mentioned as a peer competitor, could in the future rival the dominance of the U.S. armed forces in Asia but not globally. Operating from an archipelago of bases worldwide, the U.S. military commands a presence across the globe.

The United States also has the world's largest economy—twice as large as other competing economic powers such as China and Japan. Although domestic economic policies are undermining the foundations of our economic power, the U.S. economy remains strong. The immense U.S. market for foreign goods, technological edge, and basic foods production uphold U.S. stature as the world's dominant economic power.

For over a decade, analysts and policymakers have debated how to use that power. In the 1990s a political coalition of militarists, neoconservatives, and social conservatives began to make the case that America's unprecedented power should be the foundation of a post-Cold War world order. According to Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Cheney, William Bennett, Donald Rumsfeld, William Kristol, and others, the 21st century should be a "new American century" shaped by superior U.S. power and moral purpose. They argued that any country, political group, or institution that stood in the way of U.S. supremacy was in effect appeasing evil and thereby endangering global peace and progress. The "present dangers" to the international order included both liberals in the United States and international institutions like the United Nations that constrained America's ability to combat all challenges, current and potential, to U.S. might and right.



*A B2 Spirit Stealth Bomber on take-off.*

Many of the leading advocates of this unipolar power principle later joined the ranks of the Bush administration. Their ideology of power has guided the administration's foreign policy, especially following the Sept. 11 attacks.

In the months after the attacks, the U.S. public and its government shared outrage and determination. As the "global war on terror" began, support extended throughout much of the world, with a French daily newspaper exclaiming, "We are all Americans, now."

For a brief time, few had doubts about what in the world we were doing. We were going after Al Qaeda and its Taliban hosts in Afghanistan. But soon after the invasion of Afghanistan, the lines connecting U.S. actions with their stated purpose began to blur. A sense that our clarity of purpose had been hijacked by special interests prevailed abroad and within a large segment of the U.S. population as well. Since then, the United States has proceeded to squander the reserves of goodwill and solidarity offered in the wake of the attacks.

Over the past four years, opinion polls throughout the world show that the United States is widely perceived more as a bully than as an ally, partner, friend, or leader. Its reputation as a bad global neighbor is deepening, according to the most recent surveys.

The tone and style of U.S. foreign policy are viewed by many as arrogant, and they have sparked intensifying



distrust and animosity around the world. The actions and policies of the U.S. government too often buttress the perceptions that we view ourselves as exempt from international rules and norms and that we judge others by standards we disregard.

One hopeful sign is that polls indicating a growing disapproval of U.S. foreign policy also show respondents largely supporting many values identified with the United States, such as free speech, economic opportunity, and an open system of governance. Our country has a proud history. The American Revolution was a model and inspiration for many colonized people seeking independence. As a mature nation, the United States had the wisdom in the 1930s to reject its imperial ambitions and institute social democratic reforms. In the 1940s, the U.S. government led the world in establishing cooperative international bodies, frameworks for collective security, and avenues for global political and economic development.

It's time to reclaim this legacy. As we look back at our history for lessons on how to move forward, we face the challenge of shaping a foreign policy that reestablishes the United States as a responsible world leader and a respected global partner.

The responsible use of power will serve our national interests and better ensure our homeland security. If we are regarded as a leader, we will have followers instead of detractors, friends instead of foes. Recognizing that our welfare and safety depend on the cooperation of our global neighbors does not undermine U.S. power or international standing. As FDR's Good Neighbor policy and his visionary agenda of international cooperation amply demonstrated, true power is a product of prestige.

The United States is strong, but it can never be self-sufficient. No matter how powerful we are, we need the cooperation of our neighbors to confront common threats like international terrorism, WMDs, or the excesses of unregulated transnational corporations. In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks, the United States missed an important opportunity to strengthen existing international institutions or to create new ones capable of joining nations in common causes. In doing so, we could have won respect as a global leader. Instead, we took the opposite tack of unilateral action, sidelining the United Nations and behaving like a powerhouse that seeks to extend its own dominance.

U.S. global leadership is self-defeating if it seeks to consolidate power under a U.S. imperium or Pax Americana, as the Project for the New American Century and others advocate. What's more, those who frame international affairs as an "us versus them" struggle propagate a self-fulfilling prophecy. And in the process of transforming our country into a leviathan power, they devalue our democratic and anti-imperial traditions, weaken our security, and drain our treasury.

The most dominant component of U.S. power—our military force—is not well-matched to the major challenges facing America and the world in the 21st century. Supreme military power, space weapons, nuclear warheads, expeditionary forces, and the highly touted military technology being developed by defense contractors offer little security against dedicated terrorist networks, climate change, resource depletion, or the spread of infectious diseases.

This mismatch between U.S. military power and contemporary challenges argues for a fresh, cooperative approach to U.S. international engagement. International cooperation, whether through institutions like the UN or through international treaties and conventions, is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end. When the processes and institutions of international cooperation are weak or flawed, we should not hesitate to suggest multilateral mechanisms to make them more effective.

The United States has a historic opportunity to be a true leader—not a leader that seeks to institutionalize an inherently unstable and insecure position of global dominance but a leader that seeks to exercise power with respect for its global partners and an understanding that mutual well-being is the foremost goal of an international community. By adhering to international law and mechanisms of global governance and by exercising power responsibly for the good of the entire global community, we could build on the legacy of FDR and the other U.S. leaders who established the United Nations and the current architecture of international law and norms.

The question before us is how we will choose to use our power—recklessly or responsibly, arrogantly or humbly, foolishly or wisely. The answer to this question will determine our legacy and the fate of future generations.

## Good Neighbor Deeds

President Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy was not just rhetorical flourish. Especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, deeds and facts quickly followed words. All U.S. Marines were withdrawn from occupied countries, and there were no military interventions during Roosevelt's presidency (1933-45).

Roosevelt's State Department held to its policy of nonintervention in the political affairs of the region, even when countries like Bolivia and Mexico nationalized U.S. petroleum firms. According to the State Department, "Our national interests as a whole outweigh those of our petroleum companies."

FDR recognized that ingrained views about Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy and U.S. cultural superiority poisoned international relations. During his presidency he launched a public diplomacy campaign to encourage the end of racial and cultural stereotyping in the media, government, and the entertainment industries. Hollywood and the record industry rapidly got in the good-neighbor groove, and soon Latin American singers like Carmen Miranda and actors like José Carioca became national icons in the United States. Disney Studio produced "Saludos Amigos" and "Tres Caballeros," which were blockbuster hits in both the United States and Latin America.

Roosevelt was an assiduous peacemaker in Latin America, using the good offices of the United States to help settle long-running border conflicts between nations of the region, such as the protracted war between Paraguay and Bolivia. Most important, though, was Roosevelt's constant pressure on the Allies to adopt a Good Neighbor policy as the proper framework for the postwar world.

In his Pan American Address in 1939, FDR advised that the European powers prepare for a postwar order by agreeing in advance to sign pledges of nonaggression following the model of similar pledges adopted by 21 Latin American nations. Throughout the war, Roosevelt repeatedly returned to this theme, contending that the example of a New World free of inter-nation conflicts could serve as a model for peaceful coexistence in the Old World. The end of colonialism and mercantilism coupled with nonaggression agree-

ments, asserted Roosevelt, would make dreams of empire and conquest appear "ridiculous and criminal."

The Good Neighbor policy did not end economic asymmetry in the region, and it was not without its contradictions and flaws. The president's approach often required a compromise between promoting democracy and tolerating dictatorships in Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic as well as authoritarian and military governments throughout South America. The oft-cited apocryphal quote attributed to Roosevelt regarding Nicaragua's Somoza—"He's a son of a bitch, but at least he's our son of a bitch"—reflected the tension between geopolitical realities and democratic values that is an intrinsic challenge for every administration's foreign policy.

The reciprocal trade agreements promoted by Roosevelt spurred intraregional trade and fostered improved relations. But the new bilateral agreements also set a troubling precedent in U.S. relations with poor countries: the political conditioning of commercial relations. Trade and aid accords in the 1930s were negotiated with the understanding that member nations would not enter into mercantile relationships with European countries or establish diplomatic relations with the Axis powers. This represented a new type of foreign control that, as we now know, eventually became quite intrusive. Later in the century, conditionality increasingly expanded to include a broadening array of requisite political and economic reforms as well as agreements to support U.S. foreign policy globally.

The Good Neighbor policy met its demise with the onset of the Cold War. In a matter of years, policies to promote national security swept aside notions of cooperation and respect. Instead of being considered neighbors, countries were regarded more as pawns in a new "great game" that pitted the United States and its allies against communism.

**Source:** For a more extensive treatment of Good Neighbor policy, see Tom Barry, Laura Carlsen, and John Gershman, *The Good Neighbor Policy—A History to Make Us Proud* (Silver City, NM: International Relations Center, April 2005).



*Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.*

## PRINCIPLE FIVE

# 5

An effective security policy must be two-pronged. Genuine national safety requires both a well-prepared military capable of repelling attacks on our country and a proactive commitment to improving national and personal security through nonmilitary measures and international cooperation.

The Global Good Neighbor approach to ensuring national security has four points of departure:

First, it recognizes significant threats to the integrity of the United States; chiefly, transnational terrorist networks and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) both at home and abroad. As part of the Bush administration's global war on terror, Pentagon spending and overseas troop deployments have increased dramatically. Only a small part of this new spending, however, addresses the threat of international terror. Outside the "war on terrorism," the U.S. defense budget gives short shrift to critical activities such as combating nuclear proliferation, enhancing

domestic security, and strengthening the capabilities of our first responders.

Troop deployments and expeditionary forces in the Middle East have failed to reduce anti-U.S. terrorism. There is no sign that terrorism aimed at U.S. troops and contractors in the region is diminishing as a result of the "war on terror;" in fact, there is substantial evidence to the contrary. We must find better strategies to address the threats of domestic and international terrorism while taking steps to ensure that terrorists don't have access to WMDs and other armament stockpiles.

Second, the Global Good Neighbor ethic asserts that international cooperation is central, not peripheral, to addressing these threats. It recommends policy based on a vision of collective security, recalling that our safety is strengthened when others are also secure.

Protection is seldom predominantly military in nature. We don't make neighborhoods safe by arming everyone on the block or encouraging vigilante actions against delinquents. Instead, we curb access to destructive weapons, pass laws, and empower police and judges to enforce those laws. We devise warning systems like neighborhood watch groups and emphasize prevention through deterrence. The same must be true of international security. By creating mechanisms of cooperation, we not only establish networks of mutual support but also reduce motives for hostility.

Third, this collaborative approach relegates to the military a fundamental role in defending the United States but insists that providing for the common defense only rarely means waging war. To meet the security challenges of our era, the military should focus on several related tasks: defending national territory from attack, engaging in genuine counterterrorist operations, and supporting peacekeeping and peace-building operations. This requires a more circumscribed military strategy, a rechanneling of funding from military programs to multifaceted prevention and cooperation, and a transformation of military skills and equipment to reflect the new challenges to U.S. security.

Finally, the Global Good Neighbor policy stipulates that all operations of the U.S. armed forces must adhere to the international laws of war. These laws, supported by moral criteria, govern the justifiable use of armed force, including responding in self-defense to an attack, deflecting an imminent threat, or acting under the sanc-



tion of a U.N. Security Council resolution. The laws of war also regulate the conduct of military personnel and the treatment of combatants.

In recent years the Bush administration has struck disabling blows against international law in all these areas. This has weakened safeguards for our own military personnel in future conflicts abroad. It has also lowered the bar for other countries that are tempted to resort to military force, illegal operations, or immoral practices. U.S. interests and security are poorly served by the disdain that the current administration has shown for international laws of war.

The issue of nontraditional security threats deserves special mention. This concept grew out of a historical process of expanding the scope of national security in the United States. With the onset of the Cold War, the definition of U.S. national security broadened, prompting a strategy to project military force across the globe. Under this strategy, the United States was obligated to maintain a strong military presence in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. The Pentagon created new divisions in the armed forces such as the U.S. Air Force and Strategic Air Command, deployed troops around the world through regional bases, and fomented an increasingly influential military-industrial sector.

During the Cold War, Washington exaggerated the actual threat to national security by describing the Soviet Union as the head of a hydra-like global offensive. A range of conflicts from Africa to Latin America to Asia were redefined as facets of an overarching clash with the Soviet Union. As a result, U.S. foreign policy obscured the real basis of conflicts at the cost of many lives and much treasure.

After the end of the Cold War, instead of shrinking to reflect reduced threats, the definition of national security was even further extended to include “nontraditional security threats.” According to many military officials and think tank strategists, everything from drug flows to natural resources scarcity, from civil wars to the emerging challenge of “rogue states” were defined as threats to U.S. security, justifying higher defense budgets and new military missions.

With U.S. national security experts arguing for new monies to fight the “drug war,” to build anti-ballistic missile systems, and to transform the U.S. armed forces to combat nontraditional threats, the “peace dividend”

that many expected following the demise of the Soviet Union never materialized. These novel security arguments, coupled with inflated threat assessments regarding China, justified a continuation of bloated defense budgets in the post-Cold War period and established the foundation for the Bush administration’s case for massively increasing military spending even before the Sept. 11 attacks.

Yet, despite the new nature of the security threats, most spending continued to be concentrated in traditional weapons systems. The Pentagon and defense contractors kept pushing for expensive weapons systems intended to counter hypothetical enemies such as China or enemies that no longer existed, such as the Soviet Union. Although some analysts both within and outside of the security establishment warned of terrorist networks and WMDs in the 1990s, these two genuine threats received very little attention or resources.

After September 11, 2001, the Bush administration announced a new national security doctrine that broadened the definition of U.S. security further still. “As a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed,” declared Bush in his September 2002 National Security Strategy document. Thus preemptive strikes became the watchword of the modern military game plan.



*President Bush looks at a photo of the Oklahoma City Murrah Federal Building bombing at the Oklahoma City National Memorial Feb. 19, 2001.*



*U.S. soldiers being returned from Iraq at Dover Air Force Base.*

In the name of national security and confronting threats to “our national interests,” this doctrine committed the nation to an expanded foreign and military policy that engulfed problems of “poverty, weak institutions, and corruption” in states viewed as threatening or unstable around the globe. This “global cop” role defines U.S. national security so broadly that it requires an armed presence in nearly all corners of the world.

The attacks of Sept. 11 shocked the nation and the world. But the unconventional nature of the attacks did not convince the Pentagon to reorient spending. Nor did it shake hawkish policy institutes out of their hard-

ened interpretations of national security. In fact, the commitment to a militarized view of U.S. security increased despite the evident contradiction between the type of threat and the defense systems proposed. Rather than focusing like a laser on Al Qaeda and allied groups, the Bush administration went after Iraq, a target it had trained its sights on for geopolitical reasons since 1989.

The same disconnect between real threats and strategic responses exists in the area of nuclear proliferation. While invading and occupying Iraq on the pretext that Baghdad possessed WMDs, the Bush White House has opposed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, undermined the effort to establish a verification system for the Bioweapons Convention, promoted a national missile defense system, launched programs to develop new nuclear weapons, cut back on efforts to control loose nukes, and embraced new nuclear states such as Israel, Pakistan, and India as allies.

Extensive deployment of U.S. troops overseas increases anti-U.S. sentiment, as in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and perpetuates the belief that the United States views its armed forces and military contractors as global cops. Given that the pre-Iraq overseas deployment of 247,000 troops in 130 countries did not increase national security or protect U.S. citizens from attacks, maintaining an extensive network of bases overseas is hard to justify. Current plans for even greater military expansion represent the kind of global bad neighbor policy that is fiscally unsustainable and leads to greater animosity and violence abroad.

Corralling so many diverse problems under the rubric of national security is a risky business. There is no question that the United States and the international community face many challenges to our collective safety and well-being. Climate change, infectious disease, organized crime, drugs, and human trafficking are all problems that threaten our future. But by identifying these and other transnational problems as *national* security threats and addressing them in the context of military responses, we risk exacerbating the threats and inviting further violence. Although many of these challenges do pose threats to social stability (mostly in their countries of origin) and to economic relations, they do not immediately threaten the physical safety of U.S. citizens and thus do not warrant a military response.



For example, when we frame drug trafficking as a security threat and respond by declaring a “drug war,” we commit the grave error of militarizing a problem that requires a broad range of tactics and cooperative solutions. By redefining the international narcotics trade as a threat to our nation’s security, we strengthen the political and ideological role of the military as the sole arbiter of our security, and we preempt more constructive joint efforts such as development programs, heightened intelligence sharing, and cooperative health strategies.

*“I have seen war. I have seen war on land and sea. I have seen blood running from the wounded. I have seen men coughing out their gassed lungs. ... I have seen children starving, I have seen the agony of mothers and wives. I hate war.”*

—Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
August 14, 1936

The nation’s fourth president, John Quincy Adams, warned that the United States should “go not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy.” His advice does not imply that there are no monsters in the world, but it warns against trumping up threats to U.S. national security. The Spanish-American War, the Vietnam War, and the current Iraq War are among the many examples of U.S. crusaders unnecessarily going abroad to destroy monsters.

Clearly, some very real monsters do exist in the world and must be destroyed before they do more damage. Foremost among them is Al Qaeda, which is both a cadre organization and a movement. The cadre Al Qaeda has attacked the United States and its people on several occasions, including September 11, 2001, and it should be vigorously sought out and incapacitated, whether by trial and incarceration or by precision strikes guided by accurate intelligence.

However, the movement Al Qaeda is widespread and appears to be expanding—in part due to the ill-advised tactics undertaken by the Bush administration in the name of fighting it. An unending, unlimited global war on terror is not an effective policy response to this movement’s threat to U.S. national security. Rather, we need a focused effort both to address the ideological and political roots of Islamist extremism and to track down Al Qaeda operatives throughout the world. To successfully combat this movement, we need to strengthen an international consensus that terrorism is not an acceptable political tactic and should be vigorously condemned. Achieving such a consensus will be possible only if the United States can convince the world community that its counterterrorist struggle is being conducted in accordance with international law and norms.



*U.S. invasion of Iraq, March 2003.*



*Fort San Antone de Abad in Cuba after U.S. bombardment in 1898.*

**General recommendations for security policy include:**

**FOCUS U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY AND FORCES** on defending the homeland, conducting genuine counterterrorist operations, and responding to extraordinary circumstances of genocide and massive crimes against humanity. This is our first priority as stated in the U.S. Constitution: “to provide for the common defense” and “promote the general welfare.”

**BOLSTER NONMILITARY MEASURES** to ensure homeland security. The terrorist threat is too complex to be resolved using only the blunt instrument of military force. Prevention and deterrence of terrorism also requires nonmilitary responses, including strengthening nonproliferation initiatives such as the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, developing “smart” borders, securing critical infrastructure, enhancing intelligence collection and analysis, and improving the capabilities of first responders.

**DISBAND NATO** or revise the organization’s mandate to limit its scope to direct security threats against member nations. Despite the evaporation of its mission to contain the Soviet Union’s western front, NATO continues as a U.S.-led military coalition and has even expanded operations outside the region. NATO should not be maneuvered to pursue globe-trotting security missions, as it now does under U.S. leadership.

**END THE FAILED “WAR ON DRUGS”** in foreign countries and instead pursue strategies of harm reduction and treatment for addictions. Current policies advocating militarization of interdiction operations and massive incarceration of users have proved expensive and ineffective.

**EXPAND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION** among and between civilian agencies (including law enforcement where necessary) in areas that involve nontraditional threats such as climate change, infectious disease, transnational crime, human trafficking, and tracking and disposal of nuclear and toxic wastes.

**PROVIDE MILITARY OR POLICE AID** only in conjunction with peace settlements and UN or regional peacekeeping operations.

**PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM** of regionally based multilateral organizations that engage in conflict prevention, monitoring, and resolution activities, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States.

**ASSIST OTHER COUNTRIES** in developing their own capabilities to deal with humanitarian emergencies. U.S. logistical and political support for the international conflict-resolution operation in Liberia is an example of the focused and constructive role that the United States can play. When possible, supporting regional and multilateral responses is far preferable to a unilateral U.S. response.

**RESORT TO U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION** only as an exception to the rule, and do so only in cases of gross violation of human rights, such as genocide or massive death in civil wars, where multilateral or regional organizations have failed to respond. Situations that require this type of intervention should be narrowly delineated under clearly established and agreed-upon criteria to include genocide and other crimes against humanity as well as support for internationally recognized peacekeeping operations. For example, acting as a good global neighbor the Clinton administration should have exercised leadership in organizing a UN-directed and U.S.-supported regional response to the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s.

**REORIENT U.S. MILITARY SPENDING** toward the defense of the United States and its inhabitants and toward fulfilling international treaty obligations. The deployment of U.S. troops abroad in a multitude of permanent and temporary bases is counterproductive.

## PRINCIPLE SIX

# 6

The U.S. government should support sustainable development, first at home and then abroad, through its macroeconomic, trade, investment, and aid policies.

Sustainable development is a challenge facing all countries, whether their economies are highly developed, industrialized, emerging, struggling, or collapsing. But before the United States can credibly promote sustainable development through its foreign policy, it must practice sustainable development at home.

Within our borders, the foundations of our economy are shifting. Adequate employment, distribution of wealth, and quality of life are pressing concerns for many people.

Our country is running large current account deficits, particularly in trade, as well as record budget deficits. At present, the United States has a \$7.7 trillion-dollar debt that grows by \$1.2 billion a day. These deficits are being funded by foreign institutions, chiefly Asian central banks, through the purchase of U.S. Treasury bonds and other securities. But this dependence on foreign creditors is unsustainable in the medium term. The only question is whether the inevitable and unpleasant economic transition will be rapid or gradual, and whether the landing will be hard or soft. The longer we avoid this adjustment, the more costly it will be.

*A new package of social democratic reform is necessary to provide basic social safety nets.*

Much of the concern about America's negative balance of trade has centered on China with its undervalued currency and tremendous reserves of cheap labor. Yet the U.S. trade deficit with the European Union has also grown, despite the stronger currency in Europe.

Deep tax cuts benefiting the wealthy, massive increases in military spending, and mounting health care costs have been the major contributing factors to the fiscal



*Government poster in 1930s promoting Social Security programs.*

deficits. Instead of facing up to these mounting fiscal, trade, and currency crises, the Bush administration has hyped a crisis in social security and ignored the real problems threatening our economic future.

The optimal outcome in addressing the current account imbalances would be a cooperative global agreement that linked U.S. fiscal adjustment with the gradual appreciation of Asian currencies and a looser monetary policy in Europe. Given the recent lack of U.S. leadership in global economic matters, this outcome seems unlikely. The alternative will probably involve a substantial decline in the value of the dollar, thereby precipitating an increase in interest rates and a decline in housing values. This could easily spur a recession with ripple



*Refugees in Thailand after the 2004 Asian tsunami.*

effects impacting export-oriented economies reliant on U.S. economic expansion.

The vulnerability of our economy threatens the U.S. population, particularly the poor. A new package of social democratic reforms is necessary to provide basic safety nets, to insure that the fruits of growth are shared widely, to temper the market's inherent tendency toward increasing inequality, to restore and protect our children's environmental patrimony, and to make genuine equality of opportunity a reality. Instead, the Bush administration has launched an offensive against governmental social programs that seeks to dismantle the few protections remaining.

*USAID programs have not contributed positively to national or political development abroad.*

Sustainable development is not a product of free-ranging market forces and profit maximization. To ensure that trade and investment do not destroy the environment or abuse workers' rights, governments must establish rules, incentives, and regulations to manage growth and national development. Sustainable develop-

ment everywhere depends on a stable global economy, so many of those rules and crisis-management mechanisms will of necessity be global.

This was one of the painful lessons of the Great Crash of 1929, a lesson that we keep relearning in the wake of new crises like the 1997 financial crash in Asia and the Mexican peso devaluation in late 1994. Just as healthy political systems need checks and balances, economies need to be managed by rules and social contracts, if the goal is sustainable development.

On the environmental front, sustainable development requires weaning America from its dependence on finite and destructive fossil-fuel energy controlled by a handful of moneyed interests. It means converting to renewable fuel sources that can be democratically controlled and distributed to maximize environmental health, benefit the low-income public, spur alternative energy enterprises, and ensure the survival of the species.

Global pacts designed to attain sustainable development also need to include protection of and respect for economic, social, and cultural rights in addition to political and civil rights. The failure of the United States to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights speaks to its weak political commitment to ensure the economic security described by such rights. But the world will never attain real stability until the basic needs of its populations are met.

In an increasingly interconnected world, the general and long-term prosperity of the United States is inseparable from the just and sustainable well-being of the rest of humanity. We depend not only on foreign resources but also on foreign markets, labor, and technology.

Present discourse on "free trade" within the Bush administration promotes a simplistic three-way equation between trade, development, and democracy. However, the experience of the past decade has not borne this out. In the quest for environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable development, current U.S. economic policy is often counterproductive.

Developing nations face even greater contradictions. Assessing the results of more than a decade of trade regulated by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for example, it is clear that this U.S.-led economic model fails to meet its promises to developing

countries. In Mexico, as in other countries, following the recipe of privatization of state-owned enterprises, removal of trade barriers, and promotion of export-oriented growth has not contributed to meeting broad national development goals or relieving poverty and unemployment. These serious problems persist even in countries with high trade and investment.

A foreign policy guided by the Global Good Neighbor ethic would alter Washington's present course in international development strategy. It would confront the deepening contradictions of globalization by designing more stable long-term economic policies at home and supporting sustainable development abroad.

The assumption that Washington can and should guide poorer nations in their political and economic transitions is patronizing. What's more, this assumption had led to policies that actually obstruct the economic and political development of other countries. Just as the United States took the reins of its domestic policies to foster recovery and new foundations for development in the 1930s, today's developing countries also need latitude to develop policies aimed at fulfilling the basic needs of their people.

Economic history suggests that more than one model exists for achieving effective development. U.S. policy

*U.S. taxpayers rightly object when their contributions are spent on official foreign aid programs that cause more problems than they solve.*

should not attempt to impose a single model but should work to create international development and financial institutions that set generous economic boundaries allowing countries to experiment with a diverse set of strategies. U.S. policies should not be an obstacle to governments attempting to protect and promote economic, social, and cultural rights as part of their development.

Washington's bilateral trade and aid agreements have repeatedly placed U.S. economic and political interests



*Civilian Conservation Corps public works project in 1933.*

above those of partner countries. Whether through trade agreements that protect the profits of pharmaceutical companies over public health considerations or through aid schemes designed to unload agricultural surpluses, create new taste-bud markets, and foster food dependency, these bad neighbor practices do a great disservice to other nations by disrupting traditional markets, undermining productive capacity, and leading to political instability. In the long run, such trade agreements and aid schemes boomerang on the U.S. economy, as partner-country economies suffer and U.S. exports lose their markets.

Domestic community development requires rules—zoning regulations, worker safety laws, and environmental standards—to assure a high quality of life for U.S. citizens. The same is true of the international community. Market forces ignore basic considerations regarding the environment, human rights, cultural survival, and worker protection. Transnational corporations need equitable and enforceable regulations to temper their actions—and those of their competitors—across the board and across the globe.

Rather than being imposed by the most powerful, these rules should be determined by the entire community and in the interests of everyone. Current international rules have evolved to reflect primarily the interests of



*Farm cooperative supported by the New Deal.*

businesses and say little about the rights of people to a decent workplace and a healthy environment.

New multilateral, people-centered rules for globalization can help ensure that nations and companies compete against each other on civilized terms and on an equal footing. Internationally negotiated labor and environmental standards are necessary to ensure that a global economic system based on comparative advantages does not exploit advantages deriving from unjust or unsustainable practices, such as China's labor practices and U.S. agricultural subsidies. Currently nothing in the international market system prevents that from happening, and many states are too weak, too dependent on foreign capital, or too wedded to special-interest lobbies to ensure basic standards.

Unless trade policies are accompanied by rules that minimally govern resource use, regulate corporate activity, create redistributive mechanisms, and protect the environment and human rights, they will not be sustainable. The responsible role of a global economic dynamo like the United States is to allow the policy space for national governments to establish such sustainability rules, even when their doing so may affect the immediate interests of U.S. companies. Such superpower self-restraint requires a vision of a world united by common goals of growth, development, sustainability, and equity. In accordance with a Global Good

Neighbor ethic, Washington would need to advance policies that differentiate between wealthy nations and poor nations, providing preferences that allow for implementation of sustainable development plans designed to expand domestic markets, protect the environment against the careless exploitation of natural resources, and assist in national development goals.

Foreign aid is perhaps the most visible element of U.S. economic policy abroad. It can play an important, albeit supporting, role in helping to reach sustainable development goals abroad. Foreign aid is also indispensable in providing humanitarian relief and in supporting national development strategies to enhance general welfare through measures such as improved social service systems and better public infrastructure.

The United States, as a wealthy global neighbor, has a moral responsibility to provide emergency aid to respond to (and prevent, if possible) crises caused by natural disasters and armed conflicts. In moments of urgent need, both the U.S. public and government should be quick to respond.

*Donors and recipients should jointly establish community development targets for the desired outcomes of foreign aid and should design effective mechanisms to monitor how aid is spent.*

In the area of enhancing general welfare in developing countries, a new set of criteria for aid must be developed that emphasizes locally supported paths to national development. When used to sustain grassroots efforts, foreign aid can be a tangible example of the core value of mutual respect and support that guides the vision of a helpful global neighbor.

When contributing to development projects and programs led by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and churches, Americans show that they are a generous and caring people who readily come to the aid of others, whether at home or across borders. Eleanor

Roosevelt, legendary for her activities in defense of international human rights and humanitarian causes both as first lady and private citizen, expressed this spirit of caring when she stated before an audience at the Metropolitan Opera in New York: “When you come face to face with people in need, you simply have to try to do something about it. After all, this is the richest country in the world. We cannot allow anyone to want for the bare necessities of life.”

*Strict guidelines for aid must be established, given the dismal record of many previous U.S. aid programs.*

But U.S. taxpayers rightly object when their contributions are spent on official foreign aid programs that cause more problems than they solve. U.S. aid has often been used to achieve economic and geopolitical objectives rather than to meet human needs, leading to understandable skepticism—both in America and in many receiving countries—about the real benefits of foreign aid.

Strict guidelines for aid must be established, given the dismal record of many previous U.S. aid programs. Regarding both official and nongovernmental aid, cultural norms should be respected in designing delivery programs, and monitoring mechanisms should provide concrete evidence that aid is actually reaching the poor and improving their livelihoods. When done right, development aid can reap enormous benefits, as was demonstrated by the postwar Marshall Plan and more recently in UN, European Union, and NGO programs in East Timor and Mozambique. When done wrong, such aid can be an impediment to local and national development.

When possible, U.S. aid should be channeled through multilateral funds and programs to avoid the political manipulation of money sorely needed to combat hunger, sickness, and need in poor countries. In the past, aid has often not been based on need but has been preferentially delivered to friendly nations or groups and withheld from more needy nations through the selective application of sanctions.

## General recommendations for sustainable development and aid policies include:



**NEGOTIATE TRADE RULES** in both multilateral and bilateral forums that respect the principles of democracy, reciprocity, sovereignty, and sustainability, and that recognize asymmetries between nations. Reject NAFTA-modeled trade agreements, since they contain insufficient labor and environmental protections, limit the space and flexibility of poor nations to adopt appropriate national development plans, and lead to unfair competition. Expanding trade and investment should not be a self-aggrandizing goal but must instead serve sustainable development objectives.

**SUPPORT REGIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGIES** that promote broad-based sustainable development paths, including provisions to aid poorer regions and guarantee basic respect for labor protections, cultural rights, and environmental standards.

**REFORM THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS**, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO), to orient them toward sustainable development goals and to make them more transparent and representative of the entire global neighborhood, not just the corporations and major powers. If this proves impossible, then these institutions should be replaced with others that are truly committed to broadly shared responsibility and environmentally sustainable development.

**SCALE BACK THE IMF** to its original role of maintaining international financial stability through provision of short-term resources for financial crisis management, technical assistance, and economic research and monitoring. The IMF should get out of the business of providing long-term financing for economic restructuring. The United States and other great powers should not be exempt from IMF monitoring of fiscal policy that endangers global economic stability.

**STRENGTHEN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS** such as the UN’s economic commissions and development banks; encourage the development of regional crisis-management institutions, like those in Asia, to complement the IMF in providing crisis financing. Like their global counterparts, the regional development banks should be reformed to be more transparent and representative, and if this proves impossible, they should be



*Melting polar cap glacier.*

replaced by institutions with a clearer mandate and commitment.

**FUND PROGRAMS** to assure safe working conditions, living wages, and clean environments to combat globalization's negative impacts. These basic human rights must take precedence over the objectives of lower consumer prices and higher corporate profits.

**PURSUE POLICIES** that reduce reliance on fossil fuels and diminish greenhouse gas emissions. A radical reorientation of U.S. energy policy would not only reap environmental and health benefits, but it would also decrease our reliance on special relations with increasingly unstable and often morally repugnant governments.

**APPLY ECONOMIC SANCTIONS SPARINGLY** and only based on internationally recognized criteria such as the gross violation of human rights, as in Burma, or conditions determined by the UN Security Council to be violations of international law.

**Certain general recommendations should guide U.S. foreign aid, since it is often the most visible aspect of U.S. economic policy abroad:**

**END CONDITIONALITY** on trade and aid relations. Donors and recipients should jointly establish community development targets for the desired outcomes of foreign aid and should design effective mechanisms to monitor how aid is spent. Objective evaluation programs based on development goals should be strengthened to enable all parties to measure impacts and efficiency.

**SUPPORT THE REFORM AND STRENGTHENING** of multilateral aid channels such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Global Environmental Facility, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, and the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis. Provide direct bilateral aid only in rare instances such as humanitarian crises.

**ABOLISH USAID.** The U.S. Agency for International Development was created as an instrument of Cold War policy. Little evidence exists to show that its programs have contributed positively to national or political development abroad, and much evidence indicates that its programs and disbursements are more closely related to U.S. geopolitical interests. The Millennium Challenge Corporation created by the Bush administration, which heavily conditions its aid on political criteria, should also be eliminated and its designated funds channeled to time-tested multilateral efforts.

**MEET THE GLOBAL NORM** of committing 0.7% of national income to foreign aid. Eradicating poverty and misery across the globe is a moral obligation, especially for a nation as wealthy as the United States.



## PRINCIPLE SEVEN

# 7

A peaceful and prosperous global neighborhood depends on effective governance at national, regional, and international levels. Effective governance is accountable, transparent, and representative.

Increasingly, threats to U.S. security and sustainable development are transnational, cannot be resolved by armed intervention, and can only rarely be successfully addressed solely by U.S. initiatives. Logically, U.S. leaders should support international treaties, institutions, and other mechanisms of multilateral cooperation that apply regional and global solutions to regional and global problems.

The architecture of international law and cooperation that is currently under assault is in large part a U.S. legacy. As World War II raged, citizen and religious groups in the United States insisted that policymakers create global economic, political, and security institutions based on the principle of interdependence.

*Washington has no business financing or otherwise sponsoring activities in other countries that would be condemned as foreign meddling if another government did the same in U.S. internal politics.*

Partly as a result of that pressure, FDR and his wartime allies began to fashion an apparatus of multilateral cooperation and international law to prevent another global conflagration. That legacy must be reclaimed because it offers us both a vision of and an institutional foundation for managing relations among and between neighbors.

The United States should be a leader in this regard. Instead it lags behind many other countries in its sup-



*Eleanor Roosevelt displays the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Spanish in 1949.*

port for international law. Washington has ratified just 14 of the International Labor Organization's 162 active treaties, 12 of 38 environmental treaties, six of 21 human rights treaties, and only two of 12 treaties that address trafficking in persons. Only two countries have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child: the United States and Somalia (which currently has no sitting government). Washington has also failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, although 178 other countries and at least 15 U.S. states support it.

America is not alone in pursuing bad neighbor policies. Of the nuclear-capable states, for example, China, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United States have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

This record is reprehensible for a nation seen as a global leader. Yet, despite our current shame, America has a history that can make us proud. Our nation was once a leader in restructuring the international order to reject a system of competing powers and colonial domains and to create instead a solid basis for multilateral cooperation. Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt were key figures in crafting the institutions that envisioned this new global community.



*The Constitutional Convention of 1787.*

Just months before his death, President Roosevelt noted that the United States had learned “that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations—far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community. We have learned the simple truth of [Ralph Waldo] Emerson that ‘the only way to have a friend is to be one.’” This ethos formed the cornerstone of his vision of international engagement and U.S. foreign policy.

Roosevelt saw the United Nations as a means to further what he called the “four freedoms.” The United States, he declared in 1941, was founded on the two freedoms of religion and speech, but it now needed to move forward with two additional freedoms—“freedom from fear and freedom from want.”

Freedom from want, he said, “means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.” Freedom from fear “means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.”

Within this conception, the role of the United Nations was not only to address the collective security of nations and peoples but also to develop Roosevelt’s idea of a “second bill of rights” to guarantee economic well-being. In his last inaugural address, during the

same year that the UN was founded, Roosevelt noted that security required not only safety from attacks but also “economic security, social security, moral security—in a family of nations.”

Today, the United States has moved far from the Good Neighbor principles that guided the formation of the United Nations and other bodies of multilateral cooperation. The abuses in Afghanistan and at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo—justified in the name of the global war on terror—have stained the legacy of America’s respect for and promotion of international law as the rule of conduct among civilized peoples. This record diminishes U.S. moral authority and decreases America’s ability to influence other nations to adopt peaceful and cooperative stances.

Given the tarnished image of the U.S., our first priority is to work hard to convince people that our support for and adherence to international law and human rights is more than just lip service. This requires public investigations of these abuses and bringing the perpetrators to justice. It also requires a strong commitment to signing and implementing multilateral conventions.

*The United Nations needs retooling to reflect the realities of the 21st century, and mechanisms of regional cooperation must be strengthened and provided with adequate funding.*

Granted, there are serious weaknesses in the institutions, organizations, and mechanisms of global cooperation. The United Nations needs retooling to reflect the realities of the 21st century. Mechanisms of regional cooperation, such as the Organization of American States and the African Union, must be strengthened and provided with adequate funding, and all world leaders should encourage the emergence of more institutionalized forms of regional cooperation in Asia. Existing international organizations should also be reformed in ways that embody the basic principles of transparency and accountability.

Sadly, rather than prioritizing the expansion and strengthening of international law and cooperation based on shared interests and mutual respect, the Bush administration has sought to underscore the faults of these organizations so as to weaken them. In their place, the current government posits U.S. military power as the centerpiece of a new imperial order. Touting military supremacy and “promotion of democracy” as its key foreign policy objectives, current U.S. leaders propose unilateralism and exceptionalism as the order of the day.

A solid base for international cooperation requires that all nations be free and democratic. But here the U.S. role must be carefully circumscribed. Since Woodrow Wilson’s promise to “make the world safe for democracy,” U.S. foreign policy has gone down the slippery slope of interventionism. Covert operations, military incursions, and selective economic sanctions in the name of defending democracy and human rights have earned Washington a hypocritical reputation in many parts of the world.

The United States created the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) with the stated goal of promoting democracy abroad. Yet over the years, NED’s actions have frequently been aimed at undermining democratic processes that run counter to perceived U.S. interests, and the organization has served as a conduit for foreign intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. Recent revelations of NED’s role both in removing the elected government of President Aristide in Haiti and of abetting the Venezuelan coup attempt illustrate once again its negative and often destabilizing influence.

Democracy in all nations is developed from within and responds to local cultures and traditions. Thus, Washington’s primary goal in this regard should be to strengthen and deepen domestic democracy. Consolidating U.S. democracy and ensuring respect for the broad spectrum of human rights at home should be the prime focus of an agenda to promote—by example—the merits of democracy and human rights abroad. This is an ambitious agenda in itself.

Eleanor Roosevelt, proponent of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, emphasized that human rights begin “... in small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or



*UN-assisted elections in Mozambique, in 1994.*

college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works ... Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

After we convince others of our sincere commitment to international law and human rights, our second priority should be to ensure that U.S. foreign policy is not an obstacle to democratic reformers abroad. In the past our country has provided aid to foreign leaders who engaged in widespread human rights abuses and political repression, thus abetting the suppression of democratic opposition movements. Eliminating such counterproductive aid is a crucial step toward supporting democratic governance.

*NGOs should be held to high standards of accountability and respect for the sovereignty and national laws of the nations in which they work.*

Political rights are universal, and U.S. citizens can and should be concerned about their development abroad. Nongovernmental support for organizations that objectively monitor and report on civil and human rights can complement governmental support for multilateral efforts of election observation and human rights protection. Both are appropriate channels for supporting democracy abroad without seeking to dictate internal policies.



## **General recommendations for governance policy include:**

**FOCUS EFFORTS ON STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY** at home to provide a positive example for other countries.

**PROMOTE DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE** practices such as transparency and accountability as part of U.S. foreign policy, but refrain from unilateral intervention in the political affairs of other nations. This means eschewing “democracy-building” programs—whether through U.S. foreign aid or multilateral channels—that support specific individuals, political parties, opposition campaigns, or nongovernmental organizations with political objectives. Washington has no business financing or otherwise sponsoring activities in other countries that would be condemned as foreign meddling if another government did the same in U.S. internal politics.

**CLOSE DOWN THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY** and other U.S. democracy-promotion programs, including those directed by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the government-funded programs of the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Democratic and Republican parties. As part of promoting and supporting good governance, foreign assistance can play an important role in consolidating democratic transitions by backing multilateral programs that monitor elections, support governmental electoral and human rights commissions, consolidate democratic institutions, and provide judicial training. Such state-building and post-conflict peacebuilding programs should receive international financing only in their initial stages.

**RATIFY CRITICALLY IMPORTANT** human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

**INCREASE SUPPORT** for regional and global multilateral organizations and mechanisms that strengthen and promote respect for universally recognized human rights and international law.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO REFORM THE UN**, including enlarging the Security Council and creating binding mechanisms to integrate international agreements on human rights and the environment with the agencies of global economic governance such as the WTO, World Bank, and IMF. The UN should consider the creation of a representative council to oversee international economic organizations.

**ENHANCE GOOD GOVERNANCE** at home and abroad by regulating the globe-trotting operations of transnational corporations and financial firms, which are undermining the authority of both national governments and intergovernmental organizations. U.S. corporations should be subject to national laws, enforceable codes of conduct, and international regulations.

**RECOGNIZE THAT NONGOVERNMENTAL ACTORS**, such as transnational networks of environmentalists and human rights advocates, have an important role to play in a healthy system of global governance. Like other multilateral institutions, NGOs should be held to high standards of accountability, transparency, and respect for the sovereignty and national laws of the nations in which they work.

**ACKNOWLEDGE THAT INFORMAL REGIONAL AND ISSUE-ORIENTED FORUMS**, such as the G-7, G-20, and G-77 as well as the former Movement of Non-Aligned Nations, can play a vital role in good global governance and problem solving by coalescing plurilateral, creative, and dynamic clusters of states and by giving smaller countries greater leverage through alliances.

**DIRECT U.S. LEADERS** to apply good neighbor principles and leadership style in the forums in which they participate.

# An Ethic, Not a Doctrine

The Global Good Neighbor initiative is not a policy doctrine.

U.S. society and the rest of the world have had enough of Washington's "national security doctrines" and "grand strategies" for foreign policy. To answer the question of what in the world we are doing and why we are doing it, we don't need another grandiose scheme. By viewing the world in simplistic terms, doctrines and grand strategies inspire only confusion and misadventures.

A central problem with most foreign policy frameworks—such as the Cold War and the "global war on terror"—is that they shoehorn all issues into ill-defined and often entirely inappropriate niches.

During the Cold War, our leaders represented U.S. military interventions and covert operations in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as necessary to contain or roll back communism and to support the partisans of freedom and democracy. In the name of stopping communism, we went to war in Korea and Vietnam; overthrew elected governments in Iran, Guatemala, Chile, and other countries; and crushed grassroots agrarian, union, and urban movements around the world. In the name of supporting freedom and democracy, we aided and abetted authoritarian regimes in dozens of countries and directed insurgencies of "freedom fighters" in Angola, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan.

The current foreign policy framework of the "global war on terrorism" has generated hypocrisy and quagmires. In the name of fighting international terror, the U.S. government, with bipartisan support, is mired in a war against "narcoterrorism" in Colombia, committed to long-term military occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and shackled to support for intransigent hard-liners in Israel. So broad, vague, and bewildering is the framework of the war against terrorism that it justifies aiding outlaw states like Pakistan, condemning citizen movements and political leaders as "radical populism," walling up the U.S.-Mexico border, and routinely violating civil liberties and human rights at home and abroad.

Another blinkered national security doctrine will only lead to more tunnel vision and vain hope for a light at the end of the tunnel. Another grand strategy based on supreme U.S. power and purpose will engender the worst kind of nationalism—a blind patriotism based on fear and hate.

We can no longer "stay the course" as President Bush has advocated and as the leaders of both political parties have largely affirmed.

To change course, America needs a new ethic of international relations.

For that, we don't need to start from scratch or borrow from the United Nations, Europe, or any single political sector at home. The U.S. government and people have the legacy of FDR's Good Neighbor policy as an auspicious touchstone. If we restore the neighborly ethic of mutual respect for each other's rights, we will have made enormous strides in promoting security, development, and good governance—not only for our nation but for the entire globe. We will have gone a long way toward ensuring that the United States is never again feared and hated by our global neighbors as the bully on the block.

If the U.S. government adopted Global Good Neighbor ethics, *we the people* would no longer be so confused about what in the world we are doing in other countries.

*To answer the question of what in the world we are doing ... America needs a new ethic of international relations.*

The Global Good Neighbor ethic is not a detailed plan for improved international relations. It is an ethic to guide effective international policy and action in confusing and complex times. Whether the problem is devastating tidal waves, transnational terrorism, or global climate change, these principles provide basic guideposts for global engagement.

Adopting the Global Good Neighbor ethic doesn't require backing a specific political party. It doesn't mean joining or leaving the conservative, liberal, progressive, left, or right political camps. All it requires is a belief, as Roosevelt had, that everyday good neighborly practices—self-respect, mutual respect, and a spirit of cooperation—are the proper starting points for mutually beneficial international relations. This "policy of the good neighbor" was right in the 1930s, and it is right again for our time.





President Roosevelt meets in 1936 with Uruguay's President Terra following the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace.

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*A Global Good Neighbor Ethic for International Relations* is a product of the IRC's Global Good Neighbor initiative. This endeavor promotes dialogue and action aimed at forging a new animating vision for U.S. foreign policy—a vision that reflects insights from people worldwide and that is grounded in the belief that U.S. citizens should be active participants in the formation of a new foreign policy.

The IRC is launching the Global Good Neighbor initiative with a series of policy papers, including *The Good Neighbor Policy—A History to Make Us Proud* and *A Global Good Neighbor Ethic for International Relations*. Forthcoming papers in the Global Good Neighbor series include regional policy overviews that apply the ethic's principles to each of the world's regions and a thematic series on the major issues of international relations, including security, sustainable development, and governance.

These documents represent the first step in focusing a debate that we hope will grow to include a diverse set of stakeholders. The United States is at a crossroads that will define our future and our children's future. Our foreign policy can no longer be seen as the exclusive domain of experts. We believe the Global Good Neighbor ethic is one that can serve as a common ground for framing debates over the appropriate roles, principles, and practices/policies of citizen movements, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, governments, and inter-governmental organizations. We invite suggestions, comments, criticisms, and collaboration in the process of reclaiming a tradition in U.S. foreign policy and recasting it for the challenges of our time.

The good neighbor ethic is universal, and the IRC lays no copyright claim to Global Good Neighbor concepts or language. We encourage others to adapt them as they see fit in their own education, advocacy, and political campaigns.

The authors of Global Good Neighbor documents are available for media interviews and speaking engagements. All such documents, notices of events, and strategic dialogues can be found at: <http://www.irc-online.org/content/ggn/index.php>.



*"We look forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his (or her) own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want ... everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear ... anywhere in the world."*

— FDR, Four Freedoms Speech, January 6, 1941

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

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