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of elites and the messiness and conflict in politics. Proposals for new efforts at political mobilization and for more transparent democracy are not necessarily incompatible with Hibbings and Theiss-Morse's conclusions and recommendations. While they too may play out in ways that people will not like, they may contribute to a real-world education about democratic government that might alter the nature of democratic politics itself.

ROBERT SHAPIRO
Columbia University

The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century by Charles A. Kupchan. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. 368 pp. \$27.95.

During a moment when Americans brag, and others worry, about another American Century in which U.S. unilateralism will have its way, Charles A. Kupchan vigorously and with impressive scholarship disagrees. He throws not a dose, but 368 pages of well-crafted prose on the idea of a lengthy *pax Americana*.

A former member of the first Clinton administration's National Security Council who now teaches at Georgetown University, Kupchan believes that two unstoppable forces dictate that "America's unipolar moment is unlikely to last the decade" (p. 62). One force is an inevitable diffusion of power—in this case a rising, united Europe. China, he believes, will later—perhaps much later—add to that multipolarity in world power. The second more interesting and persuasive force that will help end U.S. "hyperpowerdom" (as some French prefer to call it) is the American people. Kupchan emphasizes that, not only are they historically ill-prepared to support such global power and the sacrifices it will entail, but also that America's rush into the digital age—a new era that is creating social alienation, policy polarization, and political disinterest—will lead Americans to be increasingly less involved in world affairs.

Conventional wisdom would respond that the September 11 attacks have dramatically reversed Americans' disinterest in foreign affairs and, for one of the few times in the nation's history, created a strong consensus on which U.S. officials can confidently base policies. Kupchan systematically disagrees. A policy fueled mostly by anti-terrorism, he argues, is a policy without any overarching strategy (such as containment was the strategy of 1947 to 1991). It will result largely in a unilateral lashing out in many directions. He attacks international relations experts for their abstractions, jargon, and mathematical modeling that steadily grow more distant from the real world; instead, these analysts should be developing new, workable forms of realist thought. Kupchan's fears are echoed by thoughtful Bush administration officials who wonder how they are supposed to plan, given the absence of the usual realist landmarks (especially the lack of a balance of power.)

A major strength of this account is the use of historical episodes to throw light on current problems. Thus, the “profound revolution” (p. 125) of nineteenth-century European politics, especially the rise of Germany, is outlined to show the lessons about cooperation that Europeans learned and are now putting to good use. Modern America resembles the late Roman Empire as its people start “to tire of the burdens of hegemony,” while the new European power center begins to appear “like Byzantium then” (p.153). A lengthy discussion of the 1780s American founders introduces a discussion of contemporary U.S. politics and society. Especially notable is a final section in which the author traces over the centuries the changes in the dominant economy (nomadic, agrarian, industrial, digital) and their decisive effects on political structures. The analysis does not always work. For example, contrary to the author’s generalizations, the industrial era in the United States did not precede but followed the creation of republican democratic institutions. But this correction only confirms Kupchan’s larger point that Americans seem ill-equipped to deal with those whose historical development differed fundamentally from their own. This is a provocative, ambitious, and historically informed analysis of changes that will preoccupy Americans in a future that may be nearer than they or their officials believe.

WALTER LAFEVER
Cornell University

The Opposition Presidency: Leadership and the Constraints of History
by David A. Crockett. College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2002. 320 pp. \$39.95.

What is an opposition president? It is a president “from a political party that is in opposition to a reigning governing philosophy” (p. 5). In historical terms, that means an American president who served at a time when the other party had been dominating political discourse and, in some plausible general sense, dominating elections.

Leaving aside the early generations, twelve opposition presidents, according to the author’s count, have held office during American history. Four Whig presidents served in an era when the Democrats were generally dominant: William Henry Harrison (for a month), John Tyler (the un-Whiggish successor to Harrison), Zachary Taylor (for just over a year), and Millard Fillmore (the successor to Taylor). Three Democrats served during a long post-Civil War span when the Republicans are argued to have been dominant: Andrew Johnson (the successor to Lincoln and, yes, a Democrat, if a strange one), Grover Cleveland (he counts twice toward the twelve), and Woodrow Wilson. Three Republican presidents served during the long post-New Deal span when the Democrats are said to have been dominant: Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford. The author sees a hinge point at 1980 when Ronald