



## Some Hard Truths about Multilateralism

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Throughout this year's presidential campaign, Democrats, when discussing foreign policy, have inevitably focused on a single theme: the value and benefits of multilateralism. The argument usually surfaced in one of two ways: when the candidates criticized President George W. Bush for acting (in Iraq and elsewhere) as though he didn't care what the rest of the world thought, and when they described how they themselves would conduct U.S. foreign policy if elected.

Retired general Wesley Clark, for example, liked to promise that if he were president, he would use something he called "efficient multilateralism," to "link diplomacy, law, and force [to] achieve decisive results without using decisive force." Former Vermont governor Howard Dean argued that the United States should "set a positive example and work together [that is, multilaterally] to meet the challenges facing the global community in this new century." Sen. John Edwards pledged "[to] lead in a way that brings others to us, not that drives them away." And Sen. John Kerry, the candidate with the most foreign policy experience and ultimately the nominee, told supporters that he would "replace the Bush years of isolation with a new era of alliances," would "work with allies across the world to defend and extend the frontiers of freedom," and would "rally democratic countries to join in a lasting coalition to address the common ills of a new century."

Coalitions, cooperation, alliances—in other words, multilateralism—were very

much in the air. And since securing the nomination, Kerry has relentlessly pursued the theme. In April, in his first full-length television interview since winning the nomination, Kerry slammed Bush's "arrogant and ineffective" diplomacy and swore that, if elected, the United States would "formally rejoin the community of nations."

There is something blithe and simplistic about such language, however. Of course, pledging to cooperate with other countries for the greater good of humanity always sounds nice—especially when compared to the way George W. Bush has behaved as president, alienating more friends and allies with less cause than any other American leader in living memory.

The problem with these sorts of vague promises, however, is that they are notoriously hard for presidents to make good on. Multilateralism—which can be loosely defined as acting through alliances and international organizations and obeying the constraints they set—is much harder for presidents to practice than to praise. This has been true even for internationalist-minded Democrats, as Bill Clinton learned the hard way during his own term in office. No matter what a candidate pledges to do during a campaign, once in office, he inevitably finds that there are powerful obstacles—some of them domestic, some of them international, all of them hard to overcome—that make it impossible to pursue a consistently multilateral foreign policy. For, at the end of the day, the United States is not Sweden or even Canada, and although it has often led the internationalist charge—spurring the

creation of the League of Nations, the United Nations, NATO, and the Bretton Woods network of international financial bodies—the United States also has powerful isolationist and exceptionalist streaks that reveal themselves at inconvenient moments. Moreover, there are sometimes good reasons why the world’s sole superpower has to go it alone—even if Democrats may not like to admit this truth. And that’s the case no matter who occupies the Oval Office.

Which is not to say that the United States is destined always to act without regard for the wishes or concerns of its friends and allies; or that American policymakers shouldn’t at least *try* to cooperate with friends and allies as much as possible. For one thing, the Bush administration has of late amply demonstrated the costs of aggressive unilateralism. For another, past Democratic presidents have shown that America’s unilateralist inclinations can sometimes be overcome, and John Kerry’s pledge to “formally rejoin the community of nations” would certainly be a big step in the right direction (even if the details of his promise remain somewhat hazy).

But it’s also important to recognize that acting multilaterally is far from easy for the United States; on the contrary, often presidents can do so only through enormous effort. And even then, the White House is not always successful in convincing the rest of the country to hew to a multilateral path. Fighting for a multilateral foreign policy may therefore not always be worth the struggle. Admitting as much will not make for satisfying campaign rhetoric, but it is a truth Kerry would nonetheless do well to keep in mind.

### *Domestic Obstacles*

The obstacles that make it so difficult for an American president to pursue a consistently multilateral foreign policy fall into two general categories: domestic and foreign. On the home front, the first hurdle to consider is popular opinion—or, to use the historian

John Lukacs’s more precise term, popular sentiment.<sup>1</sup> At first, this factor might not seem like an obstacle at all since, as supporters of international institutions like the United Nations often point out, a majority of Americans when polled appear to favor such bodies. Indeed, U.S. public support for the United Nations virtually matches that found in far more internationalist-minded countries such as Germany or France. When asked what kind of influence they think the United Nations has on world affairs, a full 72 percent of Americans say “very good” or “somewhat good.” This is compared to 79 percent in Germany and 75 percent in France, a negligible difference.<sup>2</sup>

Such polling data, however, paint only part of the picture. For one thing, they fail to show that although Americans feel generally good about the United Nations, they—unlike many Europeans—continue to put greater faith in their own national institutions. Europeans remain traumatized by the memory of the Second World War and the rise of extreme nationalism that preceded it. Reactions to these nightmarish memories linger throughout Europe today, finding expression not only in the Germans’ much-discussed pacifism but also in a more generalized distrust of “nationalistic” (read also “unilateral”) initiatives on the global scene. In terms of international politics, Europeans tend to see legitimacy residing on the supranational level, be it in the European Union or the United Nations.<sup>3</sup>

Americans, on the other hand, are generally proud of their national heritage and far more likely to place their faith in their own country and its institutions. Indeed, a fierce exceptionalist streak runs through many American conservatives and liberals alike; after all, it was a Democrat, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who called the United States “the indispensable nation.” As the foreign policy theorist Francis Fukuyama puts it, “Americans tend not to see any source of democratic legitimacy higher than the...nation-state.”<sup>4</sup> Although this dif-

ference in transatlantic attitudes may sound academic, the results are anything but. According to a recent poll conducted by the German Marshall Fund, less than half of Europeans surveyed (47 percent) thought it ever justifiable to bypass the U.N. Security Council—even when their nation’s vital interests were at stake. By contrast, a majority of Americans (57 percent) approved of bypassing the council in a similar situation.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, as Tufts international law professor Michael Glennon has written, “it is hard to imagine any circumstance in which [Americans] would permit an international regime to limit the size of the U.S. budget deficit, control its currency and coinage, or settle the issue of gays in the military. Yet these and a host of other similar questions are now regularly decided for European states by the supranational institutions (such as the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights) of which they are members.”<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, while it is true that, in general, most Americans favor the United Nations, they do so only in a vague sort of way. Popular support for the United Nations and other international bodies is quite shallow, and there is no evidence that it affects the way the majority of Americans actually vote in congressional or presidential elections. The same cannot be said for opponents of multilateralism, however, who, though fewer in number, tend to express their bias—for example, by sending that champion of isolationism, Jesse Helms, to the Senate for five terms. As Harvard’s Andrew Moravcsik points out, the fierce core of U.S. opposition to the United Nations dates from the 1950s, when American conservatives feared that the world body would be used as a wedge to undermine such cherished local institutions as segregation.<sup>7</sup> Although the hot-button issues may have changed since then (conservatives today are much more likely to focus on U.N. support for abortion rights or opposition to the death penalty), the strong distrust among American conser-

vatives for the United Nations, and all it represents, lingers still.

Further complicating the domestic picture, the United States is home to a number of broad interest groups that, while favoring multilateralism in principle, oppose it strongly in one specific area: namely, trade. The most obvious such group is organized labor, whose influence and popular support outweighs the small conservative core that opposes multilateralism across the board. Although the labor lobby is agnostic on many issues relating to multilateralism, it fiercely opposes the expansion of free trade through multilateral bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Two recent examples of such opposition were big labor’s fight against the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the early 1990s, and its attempts to prevent Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush from lowering textile tariffs through the WTO. Both of these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. But even in defeat, labor proved too powerful to ignore, as both Clinton and Bush learned. In 2002, according to a study by the Center for Responsive Politics, organized labor contributed \$90 million to political candidates (only big business spent more). And money is only part of the picture; according to the Rutgers economist Leo Troy, the value of big labor’s in-kind assistance (which includes volunteers’ time, favorable press in union newsletters and journals, and organizational help) to candidates for the White House and Congress this year could exceed \$300 million.<sup>8</sup>

The protectionist labor movement is especially hard for Democrats to ignore, since it gives money disproportionately to Democratic politicians: in 2002, Democrats received 94 percent of labor’s campaign contributions. Democratic presidents have on occasion managed to face down big labor—as Clinton did when he got the Senate to ratify NAFTA. But such bruising victories can be Pyrrhic. After Clinton signed NAFTA in

1993, for example, organized labor refused to campaign enthusiastically for the Democrats in the following year's congressional elections. Labor union voters dropped from 19 percent of the electorate in 1992 to 14 percent two years later.<sup>9</sup> This drop contributed to the sweeping Republican upset that made Newt Gingrich speaker of the House of Representatives.

### *Institutional Obstacles*

In addition to opposition from the general public and special interest groups, any president who tries to pursue an unabashedly multilateralist foreign policy will quickly discover that the particular structure of the U.S. government—and of entrenched opposition to multilateralism in certain sectors of it—makes such an agenda even more difficult.

Consider, first, the military. Perhaps no other American institution has proved so unified in its opposition to key aspects of multilateralism in recent years—or so effective in influencing Washington in this regard. Although the uniformed brass tolerate certain forms of multilateral cooperation, such as NATO (perhaps because that organization is always led by an American general), it is dead set against others, as shown by two recent examples: the battles over the 1997 Landmine Convention and, the following year, over the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Clinton administration started out enthusiastically supporting both ventures; indeed, the ICC was in large part an American initiative. In both cases, however, the Pentagon soon made its opposition clear, arguing that both treaties failed to take into account America's unique role and position in the world. Landmines, the Pentagon insisted, were essential to protecting American peacekeepers in places such as the Korean Peninsula. And the ICC, the generals warned, was dangerously vague and exposed American military personnel serving abroad to the constant risk of politically motivated prosecutions. Clinton ultimately caved in to

military pressure on both counts, refusing to sign the landmines ban and making no effort to get the ICC Treaty ratified by the Senate. Even if the next Democratic president proves more willing (or able) to stand up to pressure from his military advisers, much of the military's leadership is likely to remain implacably opposed to multilateral initiatives and missions that other countries more readily participate in—be it nation building or peacekeeping operations under U.N. command.

Moreover, no matter how many combat medals the next president may have won, they will do him little good in battling a U.S. Senate expected to remain in Republican hands. Under either party, the Senate is an institution that can prove unpredictable and uncooperative when it comes to foreign policy initiatives that appear to constrain U.S. sovereignty—not least because a simple majority isn't enough to get a treaty ratified (the constitution stipulates a two-thirds majority). This provision allows a minority of senators (just 34) to block any treaty, and it has spelled the death of major multilateral initiatives before (most famously, the ratification of the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations Covenant in 1920). In fact, according to Andrew Moravcsik, this two-thirds requirement “is a threshold higher than in nearly all other advanced industrial democracies, which generally ratify international treaties by a legislative majority.”<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, given that representation in the Senate is not based proportionally on population figures, the minority of senators who can block passage of a particular treaty often represent only a tiny percentage of the American public. According to Norman Solomon, a fellow of the media watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, “the 2000 Census found that 10 states—California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, and Georgia—had an aggregate population of 152 million people. [Yet] they

get the same representation in the U.S. Senate”—and hence exercise the same influence—“as the 8.3 million people who live in the 10 least-populated states.”<sup>11</sup> Making matters worse, the clubbish rules of the Senate allow an individual senator (especially the powerful chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee) to keep a bill from ever coming to a vote in the first place. Even once a bill is released from committee, it can still be blocked by a single senator, anonymously, or stalled by means of a filibuster. As a result, getting most American voters to support a multilateral measure is never enough. According to Moravscik, during the 1950s, more than 100 million Americans endorsed the passage of the Genocide Convention, yet this groundswell was insufficient to secure the measure’s approval until 1986.<sup>12</sup> What all this means for the next Democratic president is that without control of the Senate, it will be difficult to reverse the course set by the Bush administration and all but impossible to ratify any major new multilateral treaties or conventions. In fact, as Moravscik notes, “the Senate has never ratified an international human rights treaty (even with reservations) when Democrats held fewer than 55 seats.”<sup>13</sup>

### *Friends and Allies*

As if the domestic obstacles weren’t enough, America’s foreign friends and allies often behave in ways that make multilateralism difficult to sell, even by a president well disposed to the idea. Part of the problem grows from the enormous power disparity between the United States and all other countries. Washington’s unprecedented preponderance (at least in terms of hard power) has been so widely noted as to have become something of a truism. Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out yet again just a few of the vital statistics. Not only does the United States have, by a wide margin, the world’s largest economy; its military budget also surpasses those of its nearest seven competitors combined (the amount allotted for research and

development alone exceeds the entire military budget of any of its European allies). As is also well known, the United States boasts the largest army and air force in the world. But as *Newsweek’s* Fareed Zakaria has pointed out, it also has the *second* largest air force—the U.S. Navy’s. In fact, America’s control of the skies is now literally absolute and unchallenged. Not even the famed Royal Navy at the height of British power enjoyed such absolute supremacy.

Perhaps inevitably, other countries—including some of Washington’s old friends—have grown progressively more nervous about this enormous imbalance. Thus France’s former foreign minister, Hubert Védrine, famously announced in 1998 that France could not “accept...a politically unipolar world,” and went on to explain, “that is why we are fighting for a multipolar one.” His successor, Dominique de Villepin, publicly declared his preference for something he called “cooperative multipolarity,” and his boss, Jacques Chirac, has opined that “any community with only one dominant power is always a dangerous one and provokes reactions.” Moreover, such wariness toward American power seems to be shared by the European public as a whole. According to a 2003 poll, only 5 percent of French citizens and 10 percent of Europeans overall thought “the United States should remain the only superpower.”<sup>14</sup>

This kind of nervousness (and resentment) all but guarantees that European countries will more than occasionally refuse to cooperate with, or take orders from, Washington—no matter who sits in the White House, and regardless of the intrinsic merit of particular U.S. policies. What makes true multilateral cooperation even less likely in the near term is the fact that, as recent polls suggest, Europeans no longer view the world and its problems the same way Americans do. Here another truism bears repeating: ever since September 11, most U.S. citizens have viewed the planet through the lens of the war on terror and

their own national security concerns. Even after the Madrid bombings, many Europeans remain less focused on security, and those who are focused on security still tend to favor a less confrontational approach. Add to this major differences of opinion on such issues as regime change in pursuit of democratization, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the question of Islamic fundamentalism, and it becomes more and more evident how hard a multilateralist U.S. foreign policy will be to achieve.

To add to an already messy situation, some of the United States' best friends sometimes seem to act without regard for America's peculiar sensitivities and responsibilities as the world's sole superpower and, for over 50 years, its global peacekeeper. Countries like Canada, the Netherlands, and others have at times pushed the internationalist agenda too far, too fast. The United States, with 37,000 soldiers stationed on the firing line in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), could be forgiven for continuing to favor the use of landmines, at least in some specific situations. Similarly, with a total of 350,000 troops posted abroad, Washington's squeamishness about the ICC was not entirely surprising. Foreign advocates of both treaties should have worked harder to satisfy legitimate American concerns: in the case of the ICC, by defining more specifically the crime of "aggression" and by building in special safeguards for U.S. peacekeepers; and, in the case of the landmines ban, by carving out an exception for the Korean DMZ. These examples suggest that even an American president who *wants* to pursue a multilateralist foreign policy won't always find cooperative partners abroad.<sup>15</sup>

Consider one final example: Belgium's passage of a universal jurisdiction law in 1993. This legislation allowed the prosecution in Belgian courts of crimes committed outside the country, even if neither the perpetrators nor the victims were Belgian. Such a measure, if carefully constructed, could

have become a powerful tool for stamping out offenses, such as war crimes, that are otherwise hard to prosecute. Indeed, in 2001, the Belgian law led to the conviction of four Rwandans complicit in the 1994 genocide. But the Belgian measure was written so loosely that it also allowed for complaints to be filed against former president George H. W. Bush, Vice President (and former secretary of defense) Dick Cheney, Secretary of State (and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) Colin Powell, and retired general Norman Schwarzkopf—all for their roles in the first Gulf war. Such frivolous, politically motivated complaints played directly into the fear that expanding the reach of international justice too quickly would expose American nationals to special risks. Washington responded by pressuring Brussels to repeal the law, even threatening at one point to relocate NATO headquarters. Belgium eventually buckled, repealing the statute on August 1, 2003. The only parties who profited from this fiasco were those guilty of real human rights violations, since it will now be easier for them to evade prosecution.

#### *A Recipe for Success*

All of these obstacles may make it seem unlikely that whoever becomes president in 2005 will be able to steer the country down a more cooperative path. Indeed, it's important to acknowledge that the sort of foreign policy that John Kerry is currently promoting—one relying heavily on the United Nations and other forms of international cooperation—will be hard to follow at times. However, the hurdles are not impossible to overcome—if a president decides it is truly worth the effort.

Were Kerry to become president next January, he could improve his chances of securing international cooperation by simply avoiding some of the worst mistakes Bush has made as president, mistakes Bush himself seems not to have learned from. In an act of unintended prophesying during the

2000 presidential debates, Bush warned Al Gore that “if we’re an arrogant nation, they’ll resent us,” and told him that the United States should therefore act as a “humble partner in coalitions” instead of “go[ing] around the world and say[ing], ‘This is the way it’s got to be.’” Of course, after winning the election, Bush went on to do exactly what he warned against, thereby eloquently proving his point. Long before the war in Iraq, in his first days in office, Bush worried foreign friends, competitors, and allies alike by appointing fire-breathing isolationists to key diplomatic posts. With such officials in place, Bush then began to turn his back on the cooperative politics pursued by all of his postwar predecessors. His administration immediately embarked on a process of rejecting or withdrawing from a panoply of treaties it found inconvenient, such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the ICC charter (which the Bush administration publicly “unsigned”—a heretofore unknown gesture of contempt).

Building on its unilateralist momentum, the White House then publicly announced a strategy of preemptive war and wide-ranging regime change in its 2002 National Security Strategy—thereby needlessly making explicit a power all American presidents have held implicitly. In that document, the Bush administration also declared that it would act to prevent the emergence of any powerful competitor—another needlessly provocative statement.

Since then, the White House has at times publicly humiliated its allies, as it did when it waved off NATO’s initial offer of support in the days after 9/11, or subsequently, when it banned Canada, France, Germany, and Russia from postwar reconstruction contracts in Iraq due to their opposition to the war (the Canadian ban was subsequently reversed).

Publicly renouncing such policies could be very helpful. Symbolism is enormously

important in foreign policy, and John Kerry—a fluent French-speaker, schooled in Switzerland, whose father was a diplomat and whose African-born (of Portuguese parentage) wife speaks five languages—has a good chance of improving on Bush’s often abrasive style.

On substance, switching course will not mean sacrificing U.S. interests; for example, rather than rejecting problematic treaties, President Kerry could try to renegotiate them. Of course, this would require reengaging in the kind of patient diplomacy Bush has scorned but that both Republicans and Democrats have practiced in the past; and here again, with his pledge to work through the United Nations and with allies, Kerry would have a good chance of succeeding. To ensure he does, if elected he should immediately start sending U.S. officials abroad to make America’s case to other countries and their publics directly, rather than trying to do so from Washington, as his predecessor has. He should return to hosting state dinners and observing other diplomatic niceties that the Bush administration dropped. The post of U.N. ambassador should be restored to cabinet rank (Bush downgraded it in 2001), which would show the world that Washington takes the United Nations—whatever its flaws—seriously.

The United States should also push to improve cooperation on matters of real concern to its European and other partners. Technical fixes could be found to secure U.S. participation in the ICC and the Landmine Convention (indeed, the Bush administration recently announced that it will begin modifying its landmines to make them less dangerous to civilians). Similarly, welcoming international participation in the reconstruction of Iraq (as Bush has belatedly been forced to do) could start to heal some of the wounds left by Washington’s unilateral decision to go to war there. Having flubbed the diplomacy leading up to the war (and lest we think that a true coalition

was impossible, one should remember that Bush's father managed to get over 30 countries, including France and Syria, on board for *his* Iraq war), Washington should have early on offered Europe and the United Nations a real role there. This would have allowed the United States to share the burden for reconstruction and mollified continental egos that had been badly bruised by the Security Council debate.

Such measures, however, might not be sufficient to build a truly multilateral foreign policy since the next president will still have to overcome the internal obstacles discussed above. Here too, however, there is room for improvement over the current administration. Past presidents—notably Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Bill Clinton—have shown that major multilateral initiatives can sometimes be successfully accomplished, despite domestic skepticism, if the White House tries hard enough.

Probably the most famous example of a Democratic president managing to secure the passage of a big new multilateral measure is Truman's campaign for ratification of the U.N. Charter, an effort New York University's Thomas Franck has described as "one of the most dramatic examples of hard-sell huckstering in twentieth-century politics."<sup>16</sup> In order to ensure that the United Nations avoided the fate of the League of Nations 25 years before, Truman launched a massive, multipronged blitz. To secure bipartisan congressional support, the White House involved key senators from both parties—including the Republican Arthur Vandenberg, an influential former isolationist—in the U.S. delegation that was sent to San Francisco to hammer out the charter. To get the public on board, Washington funded a major advertising campaign. The administration also enlisted everyone it could to stump for the treaty, and when it was finally ready for ratification, Truman presented it to the Senate personally—just the sixth time a president had ever done so. When the Senate finally

voted three weeks later, the treaty was approved overwhelmingly, 89 to 2.

More recently, Bill Clinton used a similarly multipronged strategy to secure passage of NAFTA in November 1993 and the payment of past U.N. dues by the United States in December 2000. In both instances, Clinton faced stiff opposition: in the case of NAFTA, from the labor movement and protectionists in both parties, and in the case of U.N. dues, from Sen. Jesse Helms and other isolationist Republicans in Congress.

The deal worked out on U.N. dues was particularly audacious, since it forced Clinton to secure the agreement both of hostile Republicans and of the leery United Nations itself. As a condition for payment, the White House and its U.N. ambassador, Richard Holbrooke, had first to get the United Nations to agree to lower the annual U.S. contribution—a condition that had been set the year before by Congress. Amazingly, despite the strong anti-Americanism that had spread throughout the international body in previous years, Holbrooke and Clinton succeeded, a feat that, according to one former staffer on the U.S. delegation, was analogous to "Bill Gates, in response to an IRS enforcement action on back taxes owed, agree[ing] to pay up only if the IRS agreed to lower his tax bracket...regardless of what he earned."<sup>17</sup>

Washington managed this trick by using a complex combination of tactics. Like Truman in 1945, Clinton brought key Republicans (in this case Helms) into the negotiations. Holbrooke also lobbied Helms and other key congressmen tirelessly, traveling from New York to Washington at least once a week for over a year. This charm offensive eventually paid off; as another American staffer reported, many of the Republican members of Congress were intensely flattered by the attention, "having never before had a foreign policy discussion with a cabinet member."<sup>18</sup> Holbrooke even invited the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to

New York, where Helms met with members of the U.N. Security Council. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration tried hard to meet some of the conservatives' demands, such as regaining a U.S. seat on the U.N. budget committee and getting Israel included for the first time in one of the organization's regional caucuses. And to ensure that the United Nations finally agreed to lower U.S. dues by more than \$170 million a year, the U.S. mission embarked on a campaign of relentless "retail diplomacy": individually lobbying the representatives of virtually every member state.

The result was a historic compromise, and one that stands in stark opposition to other, more anemic, initiatives such as over the ICC Treaty, which Clinton claimed to support but never lobbied for, and which he quietly signed (but did not submit to the Senate for ratification) as he was about to leave office on New Year's Eve 2000. When Clinton and Truman staked their personal prestige on a bipartisan campaign and used their bully pulpit to support it, they often succeeded; when their efforts were half-hearted, as were Clinton's with the ICC, they failed.

This last point should serve as a caution. It highlights just how much effort is required for a president to convince the American people and the chaotic U.S. government to support multilateral cooperation. Yes, Herculean efforts sometimes do succeed. But such battles must be chosen wisely, for no administration will have the capital necessary to win every foreign policy fight it picks. Although much can be done to improve on the record of the current administration, multilateralism can never be taken as a given, no matter what party or president occupies the White House. Cooperation can and should improve, but it will not always be possible, even for a well-disposed Democratic president. The sooner John Kerry recognizes this truth, the better will be his chances of governing effectively if he is elected in November. ●

## Notes

1. John Lukacs, *Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1984), p. 263. Lukacs, borrowing from Walter Bagehot, distinguishes between "public opinion" and "popular sentiment." The former term refers to "the opinion of the more-or-less educated classes," i.e., the opinion makers, whose thinking is disseminated by newspapers (and now television). "Popular sentiment," meanwhile, refers to the thinking of the masses, or what Bagehot called "the opinion of bald-headed men at the back of the omnibus." My thanks to Nicholas X. Rizopoulos for directing me to this work.
2. "Global Attitudes: 44-Nation Major Survey (2002)," Pew Center for People and the Press.
3. Of course, Europeans are not monolithic in their support for multilateralism, as the German scholar Joachim Krause points out. See his "Multilateralism: Behind European Views," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 27 (spring 2004), pp. 48–50.
4. Francis Fukuyama, "The West May Be Cracking," *International Herald Tribune*, August 9, 2002.
5. "Transatlantic Trends 2003," Project of the German Marshall Fund and the Compagnia di San Paolo, p. 15.
6. Michael J. Glennon, "Why the Security Council Failed," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82 (May/June 2003), p. 21.
7. Andrew Moravcsik, "The Paradox of U.S. Human Rights Policy," in *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming), p. 38.
8. Author's conversation with Troy, May 10, 2004.
9. Sean Paige, "How Powerful Are Visions in Politics?" *Insight on the News*, November 9, 1998, p. 36.
10. Moravcsik, "Paradox of U.S. Human Rights Policy," p. 31.
11. Norman Solomon, "No Media Interest in a Basic Matter of Democracy," *Media Beat* ([www.fair.org/media-beat/](http://www.fair.org/media-beat/)), May 9, 2002.
12. Moravcsik, "Paradox of U.S. Human Rights Policy," p. 25.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
14. "Transatlantic Trends," p. 9.

15. As Joachim Krause and others have pointed out, such disagreements between the United States and its allies can be self-perpetuating: “The more that European governments, particularly France and Germany, continue to use international organizations such as the Security Council and international law to check alleged U.S. hyperpower, the more Washington will circumvent international organizations, disregard international law, and look for unilateral ways or for ‘coalitions of the willing,’ no matter which party controls the White House and Congress” (“Multilateralism: Behind European Views,” pp. 54–55).

16. Thomas M. Franck, *Nation Against Nation: What Happened to the U.N. Dream and What the U.S. Can Do About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 7.

17. Suzanne Nossel, “Retail Diplomacy: The Edifying Story of UN Dues Reform,” *The National Interest*, no. 66 (winter 2001/02), p. 96.

18. Derek Chollet and Robert Orr, “Carpe Diem: Reclaiming Success at the United Nations,” *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 24 (autumn 2001), p. 11.