

## PREFACE

In September 2002, the administration of President George W. Bush released a document, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, intended to provide the ideological underpinnings for U.S. foreign policy in the coming years. The document's publication coincided with increasing discussion and debate—on campuses, in editorials, in local governments, in voluntary associations, and in many informal meetings, if not so much in the U.S. Congress—on the wisdom of launching a war against Iraq. At first reluctant to involve either the Congress or the United Nations in its decision for war, the Bush administration eventually did both: President Bush addressed the United Nations General Assembly in September, received overwhelming congressional support for a resolution endorsing the use of military force against Iraq, and succeeded in fashioning a compromise resolution of the UN Security Council to resume inspections of suspected weapons of mass destruction, with an implicit threat of serious repercussions if Iraq did not fully comply. The Security Council resolution passed unanimously.

In the midst of these events, Cornell University's Peace Studies Program held one of its monthly current-events roundtable discussions on the topic, "Iraq and Beyond: The New U.S. National Security Strategy" on October 31, 2002. Participants from Cornell's Departments of Government and History represented a range of views and engendered a lively discussion. Jonathan Kirshner criticized the new Bush Doctrine's emphasis on preventive war as a dangerous departure from policies of deterrence and containment that the United States had pursued even during the darkest days of the Cold War. The new policy, he argued, will "ultimately serve to make the United States less secure at home and undermine its political interests abroad." Barry Strauss, while not endorsing all aspects of the Bush administration's foreign policy, expressed support for the new national security doctrine, particularly the U.S. commitment to "championing liberal, representative government for all peoples everywhere in the world." He criticized what he perceives as a narrow range of debate on U.S. campuses, where "virtually every academic in our elite universities defines himself as an opponent of the Bush administration." Although Strauss joined Kirshner in expressing concern about preventive war as a response to threats to U.S. security, he did offer a cautious endorsement of war with Iraq as "probably the best way of obtaining security and justice." Maria Fanis, in her contribution, provided a strong counterargument to Kirshner's view of the new national security policy as a

major departure. For her, the new strategy “really encapsulates the consensual view of America’s proper role abroad since the end of the Cold War” and is the “result of the unparalleled military strength and economic influence that the country possesses and how it chooses to use them.” Although she did not explicitly say so, her analysis implied that even a unilateral military attack against Iraq, justified on preventive-war grounds, would not be an unprecedented action in the history of U.S. foreign policy.

Given the potential importance of the new U.S. doctrine (however familiar some of its elements) and the valuable and diverse insights of our roundtable panelists, the Peace Studies Program decided to publish their views in this occasional paper. I have also included a related article of mine, first published in the November 2002 issue of *The Bookpress*, Ithaca’s newspaper of the literary arts, with kind permission of its editor, Jack Goldman.<sup>1</sup> In it, I discuss the problem that Iraq poses for U.S. peace activists, given that many of the methods they had championed during the Cold War—from conflict resolution to economic sanctions as an alternative to war—have demonstrated limited success in eliminating the Iraqi threat. I highlight the role of the United Nations and adherence to international law as providing the best means for dealing with the current crisis. The complete text of *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.

Whatever the ultimate outcome of the Iraq situation, the contributions gathered here should prove of enduring interest as analyses of an important statement of U.S. foreign and security policy at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> I would also like to thank Professor Robin Williams for his thoughtful review of all the papers and Sandra Kisner for editing them.