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# A New National Security Strategy in an Age of Terrorists, Tyrants, and Weapons of Mass Destruction:

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Clausewitz himself never addressed politics much, and neither do his successors. However, if one assumes that the United States is the right country for sheriff, which Gray clearly does, then it behooves us to pay attention to what he says.

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Korb, Lawrence J. *A New National Security Strategy in an Age of Terrorists, Tyrants, and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Three Options Presented as Presidential Speeches*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003.

Since the end of the Cold War and the subsequent demise of the Soviet Union, the United States has been in search of a new grand strategy. Over time, the question “What should be the post-Cold War U.S. grand strategy?” evolved into “What should the United States do with its preeminence?” The answers provided by the various erstwhile successors to George Kennan, who gave us the Cold War’s “containment,” have ranged from neo-isolationism—dubbed “strategic independence” by some of its advocates—to primacy, the consolidation and indefinite preservation of U.S. hegemony, of what had initially been thought to be a “unipolar moment.” Some, most notably neoconservatives, have even made the case for a U.S. empire—primacy on steroids.

The declaration by the United States of a global war on terror following the attacks of 9/11 has done little to bring closure to the grand strategy debate. Indeed, the brutally manifest new threat and the response to it, particularly as formulated in the Bush administration’s

September 2002 *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, and implemented in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, served to further fuel the debate. For many, the boldness, even arrogance, exhibited in the administration’s security strategy, especially the explicit embrace of “preemption” and the aftermath of the Iraq campaign, have raised more questions than have been answered.

It is here that Korb, with this admirably concise and sharply focused volume, steps up to the plate. In the tradition of such previous Council on Foreign Relations Policy Initiatives as *Reshaping America’s Military* by Korb (2002) and *Future Visions for U.S. Defense Policy* by Hillen and Korb (2000), Korb here lays out, in the form of presidential speeches, three alternative national security strategies.

As a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, former director of the National Security Studies Program at the Council of Foreign Relations, and former assistant secretary of defense, Korb possesses the intellect and experience this project requires.

The author takes as his point of departure the concerns—in some corners, furor—generated by the Bush administration’s 2002 security strategy. Controversies surrounding four issues are highlighted: the embrace of preemption (and apparent abandonment of containment and deterrence); the willingness to sacrifice the principles of political and economic liberalism in the global war on terrorism by recruiting the likes of Pakistan’s President Pervez Musharraf to the cause, for example; the inclination to go it alone; and the evident internal tensions and contradictions, particularly the call for maintaining and enhancing

U.S. primacy in the face of chronic economic challenges.

These issues are featured in assessments of three alternative national security strategies. The first alternative, “U.S. Dominance and Preventive Action,” is embraced by neoconservatives and those within the administration and elsewhere who have been referred to as “assertive nationalists.” It begins with the premise that “the most serious threats to American security come from the combination of terrorism, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction.” The capability and will to act preemptively and unilaterally are essential; American military dominance must be maintained; and U.S. security requires widespread democracy and capitalism.

The second option, “A More Stable World with U.S. Power for Deterrence and Containment,” is said to be favored by moderate Republicans and Democrats. They share the characterization of the threat provided by advocates of option one, yet counsel against elevating “preemption” to the status of a doctrine, emphasize the need for international support in the ongoing war on terror, and warn against the strategic overextension that may well result from proactively spreading free-market democracies.

The distinctly liberal third option, “A Cooperative World Order,” is reminiscent of the Clinton administration’s national security strategy—“Engagement and Enlargement,” in Anthony Lake’s formulation. To the nexus of terrorists, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction, its proponents add the longer-term threats posed by “global poverty, growing lawlessness, and the increasing isolation of the United States from like-minded states.” This

multitude of dangers requires international diplomatic, economic, and military cooperation; military responses are not to be given pride of place. The United States must strengthen, not tear asunder, international norms and institutions. Even the world’s dominant military power cannot unilaterally ensure its security.

Korb masterfully translates the three alternatives into full-blown presidential addresses to Congress and the nation. He also systematically and evenhandedly assesses the strengths, weaknesses, and political impact of each. Significantly, “liberal,” for Korb, is not a four-letter word. Unlike many Republicans, he knows how to count. This volume should be required reading for President George W. Bush, his advisers, and the broader U.S. national security community.

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Scarborough, Rowan. *Rumsfeld’s War*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2004. 253pp. \$27.95

*Rumsfeld’s War* is a close-up look at one of the most influential figures in the Bush administration, and a key leader in the current war against militant Islamism. The book examines Rumsfeld the man, reviewing his long and varied career at the top levels of government and industry, and analyzes his role in the two principal themes of his tenure, transformation of the Cold War military and defeat of Middle Eastern terrorism.

Rowan Scarborough is a well known *Washington Times* reporter, specializing in defense issues. While not a panegyric,