



IIPS
Colloquium
7 July 2003

New Directions in US Security Policy

Speaker: Associate Professor Charles Kupchan, Georgetown University

**Report by Hisao Maeda
(Senior Research Fellow, IIPS)**

On 7 July 2003, the Institute for International Policy Studies hosted a colloquium, at which the invited guest, associate professor Charles Kupchan of Georgetown University, delivered a presentation entitled “New Directions in US Security Policy.”

Professor Kupchan discussed US unilateralism, Europe’s continuing integration, and the possibility that Europe will become a countervailing power to the US. Professor Kupchan noted that, despite appearances to the contrary, American power may well be on the verge of subsiding, for the following two reasons: the way in which the US has wielded its considerable military power has compromised its legitimacy, such that many governments now question US motives; and Europe is now emerging as a counterweight to US power as it evolves into an integrated entity and becomes a second center of power.

Professor Kupchan noted that—despite differences of opinion and conflicts between European countries—Europe has already made great strides towards becoming a rival power center. Europe already rivals the US in economic terms, with a GDP of US\$9.5 trillion (compared to US\$10 trillion for the US), and with the Euro rapidly becoming acknowledged as a major world currency.

In addition, considerable progress is being made towards integration by the new generation of European leaders: moves towards the creation of an EU presidency and an integrated EU military force are just two of many concrete steps. Many Europeans came of age after the fall of the Berlin wall and never experienced a divided Europe. Hence, further integration and the re-establishment of a bipolar world order is clearly indicated as the divide between Europe and the US grows.

Compared to the US, which did not coalesce as a genuine federation or develop geo-political ambitions until approximately 120 years after the Declaration of Independence, Europe (only fifty years along the path of union) is well on schedule.

One of the causes of the split in Europe over Iraq was that those who backed President Bush wanted to keep him in Europe. However, the US appears to be in the process of packing its bags and virtually abandoning Europe for good, leaving behind only small bases in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. Thus, for Europe, a stronger, more capable military force is the only option.

In the aftermath of 9/11 the US political sphere has changed irrevocably. The neo-conservative wing of the Republican party, typified by Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, is in the ascendancy, while the liberal internationalist (or heartland) wing, typified by Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft, has been effectively silenced. As a result, the neo-conservative wing was successfully able to orchestrate the war on Iraq. The challenge from Democrats, too, has been muted, as they fear appearing unpatriotic. The US public’s fear of further terrorist attack is also a powerful factor.

This sea-change in American politics is revolutionary and irreversible. A Democratic victory in the next presidential election would merely serve to moderate the trend of US unilateralism. President Clinton (although a multilateralist liberal internationalist) understood *Realpolitik* and knew that the US Senate would never ratify the International Criminal Court or the Kyoto protocol.



The debate on means to combat terrorism continues. In the past, terrorism has sometimes proved effective, driving the British out of Aden and Palestine, the French out of Algeria, and the US out of Lebanon. Perhaps the US would do better in some cases to remove itself from harm's way. Similarly, should the US continue to station forces in countries, such as South Korea, where public anti-Americanism is often vociferous?

Another factor that will prove important is the increase in the size of the Hispanic community in the US as a proportion of the total population. This is particularly significant in California and Texas, two states which together account for one-third of the electoral college votes in a presidential election. Hence, in the coming years, the Hispanic vote will become even more crucial to those seeking the presidency.

Just as there is a separation between the West (America and Europe) and Japan, there is now also a separation taking place between the US and Europe. Notably, there is a profound change in European attitudes towards the US (as shown by the results of recent polls by the Pew Research Center). Significantly, in his successful bid to gain re-election as German chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder played the anti-US card strongly.



What comparisons can be drawn between the US-Europe divide and the US's relations with Japan? The US is leaving Europe because it regards its business there as finished. It is also moving towards flexible force postures, and assembling "coalitions of the willing" rather than relying on fixed alliances. In Japan, there is no appreciable anti-US sentiment comparable to that seen in Europe. Japan may not be comfortable with US policies towards China and North Korea; however, Prime Minister Koizumi goes along with President Bush in the hope of being a constraining influence.

The audience raised several questions and a lively discussion ensued on a number of topics, including the future of US and European relations, US military spending, the hub-and-spoke security arrangement in Asia, the review of US military presence overseas, perceptions of the US, the state of the American economy, and the North Korean problem.

In response to the questions raised, Dr Kupchan's wide-ranging observations included the following points.

The US and Europe appear headed for a nasty divorce.

The US defense budget is in the range \$US 300-400 billion—much more than that of Japan, which stands at around \$US 90 billion.

The US favors more bases with smaller deployments, and a lighter, more mobile, notion of forward deployment.

The US is often perceived as refusing to adhere to the international framework. US *per capita* energy consumption is three times that of Japan's. With only 4% of the world population, the US is responsible for 25% of the greenhouse gases generated.

The notion that "where the US leads, others will follow" is misguided. Other nations are becoming alienated and view US leaders as untrustworthy.

Rising US debt is a matter of great concern, as is the fall in the value of the dollar. In this light, the fiscal policies of the current administration—huge tax cuts and increased spending levels—would appear to verge on the irresponsible, and foreign investors may well look elsewhere as a result.