

America's role in this enterprise will be decisive. Paradoxically, American influence will be great in proportion to the modesty in our conduct; we need to modify the righteousness that has characterised too many American attitudes, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union. That event and the subsequent period of nearly uninterrupted global growth induced too many to equate world order with the acceptance of American designs, including our domestic preferences. The result was a certain inherent unilateralism – the standard complaint of European critics – or else an insistent kind of consultation by which nations were invited to prove their fitness to enter the international system by conforming to American prescriptions.

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