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As another era began, the poet Archibald MacLeish wrote:

> A world ends when its metaphore has died
> An age becomes an age, all else beside
> When sensuous poets in their pride invent
> Emblems of the soul's consent
> That speak to meanings men may never know
> But man-imagined images can show
> It perishes when those images
> Poets, deserted by the world before
> Turn round into the actual air
> Invent the age, invent the metaphore!

METAPHOR AS PARADIGM MAKER

We make our reality. It has a wholeness, a structure, that we shape and define. A paradigm is a model of reality, a kind of blueprint for the structure of our collective thought. Like a blueprint, it can be understood only through its own coded language, a language that we share, albeit unconscious of its abstract patterns and symbols.

As a nation, we have lived by an encompassing paradigm since 1948, the beginning of what we have called the postwar era. This structure of reality is highly complex, and it is now in the process of sea change. A paradigm shift in the life of a society is rarely abrupt and complete. The fall of the Roman Empire, even the Western Empire, took four generations, and yet it is remembered as a single, cataclysmic event.

The postwar era is ending, and with it the paradigm of reality is changing. The problem is that we can feel the winds of change, yet like the wind, there is no shape to its force. To understand this kind of fundamental shift, I suggest a new metaphor for the U.S. worldview is needed. There are scores of premises unstated, hundreds of rooted assumptions, all unquestioned, but just one guiding idea, a single metaphor. This makes sense if we accept the separation of the physical structures of reality from the premises — and ultimately, the single idea — that gave them form.

The visible structure of reality for the U.S. consists of its strategic posture, its framework of alliances, its official policies. But this is a mask for the shared basic assumptions that comprise the complex traceried blueprint we call a paradigm. This blueprint, in turn, is drawn from an idea.

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Defining Ourselves. Looking at world change and the future in terms of an idea forces us to the core of how we have defined ourselves. There we will find the seed of the next idea. Looking at change in terms of the metaphor for our world view allows us to avoid trying to predict the details of our own future, most of which will probably be wrong. We must look to the sources of our collective self. So the next world metaphor for Americans can be found in the metaphor of the postwar world.

And for the U.S. in the wake of World War II, that metaphor was reformation.

We were surrounded by the images of our great triumph, from our exuberance to our strength, but the driving theme of victory was that of an embracing odyssey unfinished. As a people we had been swept from a national tradition of global abstention into global engagement. But victory did not finish the job.

The truths of the prewar world – of Munich and the results of appeasement – appeared to be reborn in the postwar world as communist aggression extended the metaphor. World reformation itself was transformed in metaphor from the goals we sought in the Wars to a historical struggle with new premises.

The first was the Soviet threat: the existence of evil that must be contained and, ultimately, reformed. The second was the promise of the Free World: the building of good through the nurturing of a federation of democratic states, the foundation of a future world order.

From Crusade to Cold War. These premises were couched, in advance, in historic-mythic terms. The future was cast as a kind of Punic struggle, and we were led to believe that we would not be able to discern the nature of that future for generations. In the body of American tradition, it represented a change from the missionary idea of war-as-crusade – with its grapes of wrath and its terrible swift sword – into a protracted conflict of equal intensity, a Cold War.

Change has always been central to national life. The American sense of national passage has always been that of Pilgrim's Progress. The American way is a highway. Change is something straight ahead. We are always moving forward, but our direction does not deviate on this broad unbending path.

Change, then, in the American tradition, is inherently anti-revolutionary. Our "American Revolution," in fact, was an indication that we were revolutionary from the European vantage, but not from our own. Reformation, rather than revolution, is the American metaphor. We also sought to reform ourselves in the Civil War of the 19th century. It was only logical then that we would seek to reform the world.

The world we entered after 1945, however, was forever changed. And the terms of our new engagement broke with national myth. In this sense, for Americans, world war, and especially World War II, became a transforming experience. It did not shift our national path, but it widened the roadway almost beyond recognition.

New National Charge. Americans always saw themselves as representing a New World: the United States existed in spite of the tyranny of a corrupt world. Someday, Americans believed, its existence would be the catalyst for world reform. After 1945, our national myth was realized. But carrying out a global mission was outside the realm of national

experience: we had never done it before. We had grown up thinking that engagement in a corrupt world would, in turn, corrupt us.

Americans entered into their new national charge with zest. Almost immediately, however, that ebullience began to evaporate. The outcome in Korea implied that world policing did not reclaim, it only restrained. The decolonizing world did not flock to the American model like little Jeffersonian eaglets: it looked to Marx and called us neocolonialists. And like a dark curtain over this world stage was the balance of nuclear terror. We might contain evil, but evil was protected at its source by plutonium and inter-continental missiles.

The cause of world reform became increasingly muddied. It could be sustained only as long as the threat, and the promise, remained strong. It was necessary for the world to continue to sustain these two premises of the postwar metaphor.

And it was necessary to renew with the next generation a national force of belief in the inherited truths from which this world had been created. National disaster in Vietnam destroyed these truths just as a generation coming of age needed to have them renewed.

Collapse at the U.N. Then, as the Vietnam war finally came to its bitter end, the world that had sustained the postwar metaphor deserted it on its second, more positive premise: the nurturing of a Free World. The American vision of a liberal world order collapsed at the place of its original embodiment: the United Nations. The U.N. General Assembly became the rhetorical "beer hall" of the neo-New World: the Third World. The future, the Third World said, belonged to them. The U.S. was just another ancient regime; the West, an antique idea.

With global mission sullied, many Americans accepted the Third World's assertions. More might have accepted an American withdrawal, save for the continued Soviet threat. An exuberant, aggressive Soviet state kept the Western Alliance alive. Surprising even ourselves, Americans recovered their vigor in the 1980s and attempted a modest reassertion of their postwar mission.

It failed. We were not defeated; it was simply that in attempting reassertion, we found that the terms had once again changed. Reclaimed American energy and optimism did not equal eagerness, and acceptance of commitment at the center did not extend to acceptance of sacrifice at the margins. We no longer described the world, and our relationship to it, according to the inherited truths and mythic terms of another age. Vietnam had changed us after all.

Soviet Sea Change. And the final postwar premise was dying. A suddenly decrepit Soviet state decided to restructure the Soviet threat in order, on its own terms, to survive. With a Soviet sea change has come inevitable uncertainty about the relevance and purposes of the Western Alliance.

The metaphor, though seen, no longer means.

The blueprint of the world metaphor is gone, yet its structure remains. No new image has been summoned to take its place. Yet there is time enough for events to call it forth.

Right now our problem is to understand the period we are in — the period of transition. The physical outline of the postwar world may remain for years unaltered in treaty terms or

court ritual: its tracery may linger unchanged, still visible, for decades. We can see the change, we cannot see where that change ultimately will lead.

There are paths, however, that allow us to entertain possibilities. We can sense trends of thought, and we can quantify physical developments. I would like to suggest that visible patterns of change imply deep shifts in world relationships, shifts that will converge over the next twenty years.

THE PACIFIC RIM

East Asia is rightly the focus of this talk, as it has become the focus of future expectation for Americans. Part of this turn can be measured in quantitative trends: Asia now accounts for more of U.S. trade than Western Europe. That figure, however, is merely an indicator of shifting activity. The real issue for Asia and the U.S. is bound up in the hopes and fears that have followed the postwar era.

In the period of containment, the U.S. held an evil system at bay while encouraging the emerging world to appear. The Soviet Union was the threat and also the great competitor: "We will bury you!" said Khrushchev, and Americans looked uneasily to Soviet steel production overtaking ours.

Now the U.S. looks to East Asia from three distinct vantages:

First, Asia as the place where Americans have been.

> The Pacific — heading West beyond the continental frontier — was envisaged as America's destiny as early as 1846. American trade with China began in the 1780s; the U.S. opened Japan to the world in the 1850s; missionaries, the Open Door. . . We underwrote the East Asian security in the 1920s and remained engaged in the 1930s while ignoring Europe's slide to war. We have fought two wars in Asia since 1945. Americans are comfortable with the traditions of Pacific commitment. It is a stake that can exist — unlike NATO — without an overarching military threat.

Second, Asia as the place where the American way has taken root.

> In American myth, East Asia always has been a natural focus of national mission. In the last decade, however, Asian societies have been made into mirrors of American values. Their open embrace of the free market has become a banner for the Third World. Their economic success has become a symbol of the triumph of the American vision. At first it was Japan only, but then it spread exuberantly to South Korea and Taiwan and Singapore. Then China's reforms came, to write the epitaph on Marxian economic theory. The U.S. is again a model to the world.

Third, Asia as the place where America's future will be tested.

> Asia's success signals America's triumph within the old paradigm. The free market has won the "hearts and minds" of the world, while Marxism has fallen even in the place of its first conversion: the Soviet

Union. But a future world, driven this time by American concepts of open competition, seems full of snares and struggles as daunting as the immediate post-World War era. However dark and charged with the threat of atomic war, that world at least was heroic. The United States was leader of a free band of states, strong and unquestioned. Today, the heroic context is gone. Americans agonize over the specter of national decline. East Asia becomes a benchmark of our own worth, on terms we once defined.

JAPAN

In the postwar era, Japan was a front line state along the boundary of containment. Japan was seen as a strategic, not an economic, anchor of the Free World. It was an offshore, rimland base.

The Japanese economic "miracle" was a great bonus, a moral indicator that containment was doing its work. Miracle was also model, however, for the central theme of the postwar metaphor: reformation. The political uplifting of Japan seemed a just and fitting end to the work of the great crusade; but to have democracy so demonstrably endow prosperity unprecedented in Japanese history gave the goals of our postwar grand strategy visible meaning.

Only in the last decade has that miracle seemed to rob the miracle giver. Japan has come to dominate international financial markets. The Japanese are now the world's largest creditors. Their investments in the United States potentially threaten U.S. control of key sectors of its own industrial base. Their savings rate far out-distances that of the U.S. They have the edge in applied technology and are aggressively pursuing technology's leading edge, once an unquestioned American preserve. They have the money, and they have used their ministries effectively to intervene in international competition.

Double Disadvantage. An emerging era of economic competition, unmarked by major war, will find the U.S. in a situation of double strategic disadvantage:

First, we continue to face the threat of the USSR's totalitarian war machine. The Soviets must continue the fierce face of power, even though they sense its societal costs. We will be challenged to reciprocate. The U.S. is not prepared to revise the basic terms of world relationships. The conundrum for America is that a stable world still depends on U.S. military power. American withdrawal courts a future of Japan, China, and the USSR armed to atomic teeth. The irony is that, in underwriting East Asian stability, the U.S. is forced to continue its military presence, which is a drain for the U.S. and a big yearly bonus for Japan. Moreover, our military strength subtly sustains the illusion of American dominance.

The American military effort needed to sustain a world centered around economic competition, in other words, undercuts our own awareness of that centrality. We are forced to undermine our own awareness of that centrality. We are forced not only to spend for others. Our spending helps others save. Ultimately, we are less able to recognize the implications of world change nurtured by our sacrifice.

Risking a Rupture. Second, growing Soviet military power in the Western Pacific and a weakly armed Japan means that we will continue to view Japan as ally, as junior partner, and as dependent, no matter how false this is in terms central to the relationship. Japan

uses this old image to great effect. The picture of a dependent Japan constantly renews the U.S. notion of reformation. By creating an impression of vulnerability and need, which only the U.S. can assuage, the Japanese obscure the reality of two equals (Washington and Tokyo) in serious competition. We are mentally disarmed by our own longing: we want to continue to be the beacon of the old metaphor. Japan simply shapes American nostalgia to its advantage.

The U.S. and Japan run a genuine risk of rupture in the next twenty years if both try to sustain this nostalgia long after its time. The U.S. is threatened by its old nativism, and Japan by an incapacity to integrate its past with its future.

Both the U.S. and Japan need quickly to recognize the fragility as well as the strength of their relationship. Japanese-American economic interdependence is so extensive, and the intertwining so beneficial, that a break would mean economic disaster for both. But this break, if it came, would be made in spite of economic hardship. Beneath an internationalist layer, Americans retain a stubborn nativist core. The United States will never permit an openly unequal relationship. They will choose economic nationalism over leashed prosperity.

Building Leverage. Japan has chosen a long-term strategy that is the natural result of rules the U.S. laid down by decreeing that Japan could no longer seek defense autonomy, that it must depend on us for security. Japan's response, which may have become clear to Japanese strategists only recently, is to control their national security by building leverage over the source of that security. It is a triumph of Liddell Hart's "strategy of the indirect approach."

Japanese are now recognizing that this course may be dangerous. The appearance of too much leverage threatens all leverage. Japanese and American leaders are fond of talking partnership, as though this could have firm footing even if Japan's GNP were to edge out our own. Americans would find partnership on these terms threatening.

And as the prospect of these terms precipitates conscious threat, the electorate will respond. When economic performance again assumes, as it did in the late 19th century, centrality as the relevant index of national power, it will eventually become the currency of our strategic thinking, as it has been so long for Japan. When this language is coined, and circulated, all talk of strategic partnership will vanish. For Americans, Japan will become the adversary.

The United States, however, has some subtler and constructive leverage. Japan has nowhere else to go for its security, and the historical failure of the attempt of the Japanese during the recently concluded "Showa" era to achieve national security autonomy is now too embedded a national truth to dislodge. Only the U.S. can mediate effectively with China on Japan's behalf, and America's relationship with China worries Japan. Historic enmity between Japan and the newly industrializing countries (NICs) also underscores similar American advantage. In twenty years, Japan may have crested as an economic power. The real aging of its population will hit Japan after 2010, right around the time they will face real competition with China and the NICs. An American security blanket may become an economic blanket, as they seek a U.S.-Japan trade bloc on U.S. terms.

CHINA

China remains the focus of an enduring mythology about the U.S., the Far East, and the future. American mythology had made the uplifting of China the preferred path to world change: the rooting of our values there would give force everywhere to our cause of world reform. The "loss" of China to communism was worse than mere defeat, it was a seemingly irreversible setback to our global aspirations. If China was "the future," it was the thrall of a Soviet vision of that future. It might be argued that containment could not be considered a strategic success until it once again wrested China back.

This historical-cultural subtext must be remembered to appreciate fully the power of American emotions toward China today. If rapprochement in the 1970s was a "cold war high" for Americans, a sudden strategic serendipity, then the cultural homage of economic reform was nothing less than a kind of national catharsis for the U.S. Ten years ago, strategic alignment told Americans that "we would make it" in spite of the decline of U.S. military power. Today, our fear of national decline is more encompassing. Can we use an enduring American myth — changing China — against new competitors?

Preserving Partnerships. Even though some, such as Paul Kennedy in his *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, will argue in the coming decade that continued U.S. military presence in East Asia strengthens our economic competitors, Japan and the Four Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), while weakening our capacity to compete, military power can have economic leverage. Military guarantees can preserve our partnership with Japan on economic terms still acceptable to the U.S. American military joint ventures and technology-sharing with China should both forestall a Sino-Soviet rapprochement and increase our leverage with Japan.

It is often assumed that the Soviet threat is the glue preserving U.S. leadership and influence in East Asia. But leadership status and transitory influence are no longer the issues. Economic competition is the issue. A continuing decline in the Soviet threat in Asia enhances, does not diminish, U.S. leverage. Traditional tensions and rivalries between East Asian states will resurface. American mediation may be more highly valued in twenty years than it ever was in days of cold war crisis. Although the military component of our grand strategy may decline, the U.S. should use its strategic advantage to stabilize its economic position. The U.S. can retain unchallenged military leverage in East Asia for decades, and it remains to our long-term advantage to continue as the great balancing force in Asia. American abandonment of Asia, however, could promote partnerships — evolving from a Sino-Soviet rapprochement, a Soviet-South Korean or Soviet-Japanese partnership — that might turn the global economic balance against us.

No matter how trends intertwine, the dynamic societies of the Pacific rim are essential yardsticks of what may be America's new metaphor. In a world where the prospect of major war is postponed for a generation, as the Chinese formally aver, the watchword for the United States will be: renewal.

RENEWAL

U.S. economic competitiveness is the measure by which we will judge ourselves; East Asia is the standard of that measure. We will worry about the challenge of a united

European economic bloc, and we will fret over the rising productivity of big economies in the Third World. But our unbending gaze will be on the Pacific.

And in spite of American fears of decline, the U.S. remains the world's source of stability and innovative strength. America needs its engagement in Asia to sustain its own sense of national purpose. In a fragmenting future of autonomous, smaller worlds, it will be essential to preserve a working framework of world order, a metaphor of renewal. For Americans especially, it will be important to be the leading force, if not the leader, of this association.

This future may be marked more by "collegial associations" than by alliances. In a world where national security is equated with economic health, the U.S. will need to keep alive a sense of fraternity with Western Europe and an informal alliance with China. The American-Japanese bond will be essential to this health, yet its terms may become more brittle if the relationship is perceived as slipping away from equality.

WHAT OLD METAPHORS TELL

The terms of world relationships may begin to resemble those of the 1920s. We committed ourselves, completely if briefly, to Europe's fate. Without a successor adversary, as Stalin was to us after 1945, we could posit a horizon without major war. Look at its features:

♦ ♦ When American military force was used, it was in the Latin South.

♦ ♦ U.S. strategic forces — its battlefleet — were used to underwrite East Asian security in the Washington Treaties.

♦ ♦ The core of this security system was an arms control regime.

♦ ♦ U.S. moral and emotional focus in foreign policy was China.

♦ ♦ There was apprehension, yet hope, over Japan's future.

♦ ♦ The USSR, the longtime East Asian security threat, was retrenching.

♦ ♦ The U.S. connection with Europe was primarily financial and advisory.

♦ ♦ The U.S. future seemed bound up in Asia and the Pacific.

But historical analogy only serves as a reminder that the world we knew is not permanent and that there are other ways for the United States to draw its world relationships.

Let us accept that we live in a period of transition. Let us also entertain seriously the proposition that during this transition we live by a tandem metaphor. The old metaphor in which the U.S. sought to contain and reform the Soviet Union survives in ritual, in budgets, and as a comfort that the world we know is not about to simply fall apart. The new metaphor, Melville might say, "heaps us," it tasks us. The wonder of the old metaphor cannot be forced to die, its myths are part of the skein of national myth now. The crusading war, and the integration of myth into the belief system are translated ultimately into the reinforcement, even celebration of core national values. This was done, however slowly, with the U.S. involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s.

But it has passed into myth. Its language has become historical caricature. And the postwar experience, however victorious on some fields, left us wounded. The new metaphor

must emerge from what has been left unfinished by the old, the wounds that the old could not heal.

If that metaphor becomes one of national renewal, then its dramaturgy will be played out at home. The external stages will be like platform extensions to the main stage. One will be the near Third World, and one will be East Asia. Both will serve as mirrors of the challenge we set for ourselves. The near Third World mirrors the domestic corruption of drugs and the decline of our very culture. East Asia mirrors the potential loss of our vision, of the measure of ourselves.

Designing the Next Metaphor. So Japan and the Four Tigers represent both promise and perdition: promise, in that we did succeed, that American values and the Free World strategy worked; perdition, in that we may also have failed, that in giving to others we exhausted ourselves. The next metaphor will be designed, and must prove that last legacy of the old metaphor wrong.

Any look ahead must be cautious. The Soviet Union will not lose its military power in the next twenty years, nor will military power become irrelevant. What has been suggested is a converging set of shifts in world relationships. All have been developing for decades. Some, such as the growth of Japan, have been seen and observed in isolation. Others, such as the impulse for European autonomy, have been noted with apprehension, but the moment of their impact could not be gauged. Still others, as the collapse of Soviet self-confidence, have been waiting, invisible, for the moment of recognition.

It is their apparent convergence that is so compelling now. Soon, there will be no turning back to the world of superpowers, containment, and the Free World. We await only the new metaphor.