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## INTRODUCTION

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### THE SECRET TO WORLD DOMINANCE

How fast the world changes. In the 1980s, the United States was a mere superpower, with an easy-to-hate authoritarian rival. Ten years later, it was the world's undisputed hyperpower, and American global dominance seemed almost boundless. Today, after the debacles of Iraq and Hurricane Katrina, people are already talking about America's decline.

When the term *hyperpower* was first applied to the United States, it was not intended favorably. The word was coined by France's foreign minister Hubert Vedrine, one of the most outspoken critics of the United States, when he declared that France "cannot accept a politically unipolar world, nor a culturally uniform world, nor the unilateralism of a single hyperpower." Although he meant "hyperpower" reproachfully, Vedrine captured a historical development of fundamental importance. As Vedrine described it, the United States had become "dominant or predominant in all categories": America had attained not only economic, military, and technological preeminence, but also a "domination of attitudes, concepts, language and modes of life."<sup>1</sup>

Today, the idea of an America "dominant in all categories" does not ring quite as true. America remains the world's economic and military powerhouse, but it is beleaguered on many fronts, its

confidence shaken, its reputation bruised, its fisc depleted by hundreds of billions poured into a war it may not win. Meanwhile, other emerging powers are shifting and jockeying for position. The European Union has not only a larger population but a gross domestic product already almost equal to that of the United States. China, with a fifth of the world's people, is exploding after centuries of stagnation. Could China, the EU, or perhaps some other contender—such as India—overtake the United States, or at least gain sufficient strength to reestablish a multipolar world order?

Whether America retains or falls from its hyperpower status is a question of immense consequence for both the world and the United States. Does the twenty-first century need an “American Empire,” as the British historian Niall Ferguson argues, to deal with genocide, rogue states, and “terrorist organizations committed to wrecking a liberal world order”?<sup>2</sup> Or is an American hyperpower a threat to world peace and global stability, as others believe?<sup>3</sup> From the U.S. point of view, would American decline mean unemployment, reduced standards of living, and increased vulnerability to attack? Or is America's role as hyperpower paradoxically leading the nation to bankrupt its future, incur the world's wrath, and make itself even more of a terrorist target?

This book is about hyperpowers—not great powers, not even superpowers, but *hyper*powers. Many have written about empires, ancient and modern, despotic and beneficent.<sup>4</sup> Explaining the rise and fall of empires has been a particularly venerable pastime, dating back to the Greeks. Thucydides hinted that democracy was to blame for the fall of Athens.<sup>5</sup> Edward Gibbon singled out Christianity as a primary cause of Rome's decline.<sup>6</sup> In recent times, Paul Kennedy attributed the fall of great powers more sweepingly to “imperial overstretch,” while Jared Diamond in *Collapse* identified “environmental damage” as a chief culprit.<sup>7</sup> After 9/11 and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, writing about empires and imperialism, whether hopefully or condemningly, has practically become an industry.<sup>8</sup>

To date, however, no one has systematically analyzed the rarer phenomenon of hyperpowers, the remarkably few societies—barely more than a handful in history—that amassed such extraordinary military and economic might that they essentially dominated the world. This is a special category, acutely relevant to the present day, the hidden dynamics of which have yet to be laid bare. How does a society come to be not merely a great power but a *world-dominant power*? And once a society has achieved such dominance, what can bring it down? In the rise and fall of hyperpowers past, there are crucial lessons to be learned, reflecting both the similarities and the differences between the United States and its predecessors, with far-reaching implications for the twenty-first century.

The thesis of this book is as follows. For all their enormous differences, every single world hyperpower in history—every society that could even arguably be described as having achieved global hegemony—was, at least by the standards of its time, extraordinarily pluralistic and tolerant during its rise to preeminence. Indeed, in every case tolerance was indispensable to the achievement of hegemony. Just as strikingly, the decline of empire has repeatedly coincided with intolerance, xenophobia, and calls for racial, religious, or ethnic “purity.” But here's the catch: It was also tolerance that sowed the seeds of decline. In virtually every case, tolerance eventually hit a tipping point, triggering conflict, hatred, and violence.

Let me begin by clarifying what I mean by a “world-dominant power.” Defining this term is tricky, especially given that the world was so much larger two thousand, or even five hundred, years ago, before ships, planes, and technology drastically shrank it. Rome in its heyday, for example, was clearly a world-dominant power—if it wasn't, then no one was—even though halfway across the globe there existed another great empire, Han dynasty China, with which Rome had virtually no contact. If the point is that Rome was dominant in *its* world—the world it knew and inhabited—then weren't the Aztecs dominant in their world, the Egyptians in theirs, and so on? Isn't Tahiti a hyperpower in its own little world?

Any definition that includes Tahiti as a global hegemon is clearly too broad. But what is the right definition? What exactly differentiates Rome from, say, the Aztecs, who at one time dominated Central America but who could never have been considered a world-dominant power? Several factors are obvious: the sheer size of the Roman Empire (2 million square miles, as compared to estimates of between 11,000 and 77,000 square miles for the Aztecs); the immense population ruled by Rome (roughly 60 million, as compared to estimates of between 1 and 6 million for the Aztecs)<sup>9</sup>; the fact that no power on earth (including Han China) was economically or militarily superior to Rome during the High Empire; and the fact that Rome competed with and overpowered societies on the then cutting edge of world technological development. In short, the critical difference is that Rome did not merely achieve dominance in *its* world; it achieved dominance in *the* world.

Accordingly, for the purposes of this book, I will consider a nation or empire a world-dominant power only if it satisfies all three of the following conditions: Its power clearly surpasses that of all its known contemporaneous rivals; it is not clearly inferior in economic or military strength to any other power on the planet, known to it or not; and it projects its power over so immense an area of the globe and over so immense a population that it breaks the bounds of mere local or even regional preeminence. Under this definition, Louis XIV's France was not a world-dominant power; neither was the Hapsburg Empire, or the United States during the Cold War. Each of these great powers failed condition one: They each had formidable rivals of roughly comparable might.

Much of this book will be devoted to discussing the societies that *do* qualify as hyperpowers and to showing how in every case tolerance was critical to their rise to world dominance. But let me first say something about why tolerance has been so vital. This claim might initially seem surprising, but in fact there is a very simple, intuitive explanation.

To be world dominant—not just locally or regionally dominant—a society must be at the forefront of the *world's* technolog-

ical, military, and economic development. And at any given historical moment, the most valuable human capital the world has to offer—whether in the form of intelligence, physical strength, skill, knowledge, creativity, networks, commercial innovation, or technological invention—is never to be found in any one locale or within any one ethnic or religious group. To pull away from its rivals on a global scale, a society must pull into itself and motivate the world's best and brightest, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or background. This is what every hyperpower in history has done, from Achaemenid Persia to the Great Mongol Empire to the British Empire, and the way they have done it is through tolerance.

But wait—the *Mongols* were tolerant? Genghis Khan's ravaging hordes razed entire villages, then used the corpses as moat-fill. Persia's King Darius sliced off the ears and noses of his enemies before impaling them. (One of Darius's predecessors, King Cambyses, skinned a corrupt official, turning him into chair upholstery.) The British Empire, according to the entire field of postcolonial studies, was built on the racism and condescension of the White Man's Burden. Can these empires possibly be described as tolerant?

I'm going to suggest that the answer, surprisingly, is yes. But that's because I'm not talking about tolerance in the modern, human-rights sense.<sup>10</sup> By tolerance, I don't mean political or cultural equality. Rather, as I will use the term, tolerance simply means letting very different kinds of people live, work, and prosper in your society—even if only for instrumental or strategic reasons. To define the term a little more formally, tolerance in this book will refer to the degree of freedom with which individuals or groups of different ethnic, religious, racial, linguistic, or other backgrounds are permitted to coexist, participate, and rise in society.

Tolerance in this sense does not imply respect. The Romans, while recruiting warriors from all backgrounds to build their massive military, also saw themselves as favored by the gods and constantly expressed contempt for the "completely savage" Celts, the "the unclad Caledonii" who "lived for days on end in marshy

bogs," and the "vast and beastly" northern Europeans with their "huge limbs."<sup>11</sup> Tolerance, moreover, can be selectively deployed. Groups perceived as useful may be tolerated even while others are excluded or violently oppressed. By the late eighteenth century, the English were learning to accept Protestant Scots as fellow Britons—particularly since the Scots were seen as assets for empire building—but this new British tolerance hardly extended to Irish Catholics.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the key concept is *relative* tolerance. In the race for world dominance, what matters most is not whether a society is tolerant according to some absolute, timeless standard, but whether it is more tolerant than its competitors. Because tolerance is a relative matter, even the tolerated groups may be subject to harshly inequitable treatment. Russian Jews in the late nineteenth century found America a haven compared to the pogroms they were fleeing, but were still subjected to anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish quotas in the United States.

I am not arguing that tolerance is a sufficient condition for world dominance. No matter how tolerant, the Kingdom of Bhutan is unlikely ever to become a global hegemon. It is always a confluence of additional factors—geography, population, natural resources, and leadership, to name just a few—that leads to the rare emergence of a world-dominant power. Pure luck plays a part, too. Even in the most propitious circumstances, a society's ability to achieve and maintain global dominance will also depend, for example, on the state of the competition.

Rather, I am arguing that tolerance is a *necessary* condition for world dominance. Conversely, I am also arguing that intolerance is starkly associated with the decline of hyperpowers. Here, however, separating cause from effect is more problematic. It is often difficult to say whether intolerance leads to decline, or whether intolerance is a by-product of decline. In most cases, both propositions are probably true.

Finally, my thesis is not that more tolerance always leads to more prosperity, nor that tolerance is necessary for prosperity. Plenty of intolerant societies have become rich and powerful; Nazi

Germany is a case in point. But throughout history, no society based on racial purity, religious zealotry, or ethnic cleansing has ever become a world-dominant power. To attain and maintain dominance on a global scale, coercion is simply too inefficient, persecution too costly, and ethnic or religious homogeneity, like inbreeding, too unproductive.

The United States is perhaps the quintessential example of a society that rose to global dominance through tolerance. Of course, for much of its history the United States was no more an exemplar of human rights than were the Romans or the Mongols. Americans kept slaves; they brutally displaced and occasionally massacred indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, from the beginning, through a genuinely revolutionary commitment to religious freedom as well as a market system unusually open to individuals of all classes and diverse nationalities, the United States attracted, rewarded, and harnessed the energies and ingenuities of tens of millions of immigrants.

This immigrant manpower and talent propelled the country's growth and success from westward expansion to industrial explosion to victory in World War II. Indeed, America's winning the race for the atomic bomb—an event of unfathomable historical importance—was a direct result of its ability to attract immigrant scientists fleeing persecution in Europe. In the decades after the war, with *Brown v. Board of Education* and the civil rights movement, the United States at last began, however fitfully and imperfectly, to develop into one of the most ethnically and racially open societies in world history. Not coincidentally, this was also the period in which the United States achieved world dominance.

America's emergence as a hyperpower in the last decade of the twentieth century was in part the consequence of the Soviet Union's collapse. But it also reflected the United States' staggering technological and economic dominance in the burgeoning Computer Age, and this dominance once again stemmed directly from America's superior ability to pull in talented and enterprising indi-

viduals from all over the world. Silicon Valley, which catalyzed the greatest explosion of wealth in the history of man, was to an astonishing extent an immigrant creation.

But while America is like every past hyperpower in the fundamental respect that it owes its world dominance to tolerance, it also differs radically from its predecessors. America is the first mature, universal-suffrage democracy to become a hyperpower. It is the first hyperpower to inhabit a world where human rights and the right of all nations to self-determination are almost universally recognized. Finally, America is the first hyperpower to confront the threat of global terrorist networks potentially wielding weapons of mass destruction.

This unprecedented constellation of factors leaves many Americans today profoundly uncertain about the proper role of the United States in the world. How should America use its military might? How can the threat of terrorism be met? Should America try to remain a hyperpower, or would a return to a multipolar global order be better for the world and even for the United States itself?

No such uncertainty was in the air in the first years after the fall of the Berlin Wall—a period of almost euphoric global optimism. Communism had been defeated, authoritarianism discredited. Francis Fukuyama announced the “end of history.” There seemed to be a consensus, not just in Washington but to a considerable extent all around the world, that the spread of markets and democracy would “turn all friends and enemies into ‘competitors,’ ” permitting “more people everywhere to turn their aspirations into achievements,” erasing “not just geographical borders but human ones.”<sup>13</sup> Free market democracy was the only game in town, and the United States was the natural leader of an increasingly globalizing, marketizing, democratizing world.

In retrospect, perhaps the most striking feature of this period was the widespread assumption that the United States would *not* get into the business of warmaking or military coercion. Here was a country with unrivaled military might and the most devastating arsenal of weapons known to man. Yet in the 1990s many both in-

side and outside the United States simply assumed that the world's new hyperpower would not use its military aggressively for expansionist, empire-building purposes. Instead, when it came to U.S. military power, the most debated questions were whether the use of force for purely humanitarian purposes was permissible (as in Bosnia or Rwanda), and what America should do with its “peace dividend”—the billions of dollars it would no longer have to spend on defense. America was, it seemed, the world's first hyperpower that was *not* an empire, the first hyperpower with no militaristic imperial designs.

But September 11, 2001, changed everything. Within a month, the hyperpower was at war. A year later, the United States issued a new National Security Strategy, emphasizing “the essential role of American military strength,” asserting the right to “act preemptively,” and declaring a commitment to maintaining American unipolar military superiority. Suddenly, talk of an American empire was everywhere. Articles appeared—not only in such publications as the *Wall Street Journal* and *Weekly Standard*, but also in the *New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor*—openly championing American imperialism. “Afghanistan and other troubled lands today cry out,” wrote Max Boot in his much-quoted “The Case for American Empire,” “for the sort of enlightened foreign administration once provided by self-confident Englishmen in jodhpurs and pith helmets.” The “answer to terrorism,” asserted historian Paul Johnson, is “colonialism.” Early in 2003, Harvard human rights scholar Michael Ignatieff asked, “[W]hat word but ‘empire’ describes the awesome thing America is becoming?” and argued that American imperialism was “in a place like Iraq, the last hope for democracy and stability alike.” Around the same time, Niall Ferguson called on Americans to shed their fear of “the ‘e’ word” and to take up Great Britain's former imperial mantle.<sup>14</sup>

What exactly did these proponents of an American empire have in mind? Obviously, no one was calling for President George W. Bush to be named Emperor of the Middle East as Queen Victoria was once named Empress of India. Rather, for most of its ad-

vocates, the idea of an American empire refers to the aggressive, interventionist use of U.S. military force, with or without international approval, to effect regime change and nation building—to replace dictatorships, rogue states, and other threatening regimes with pro-market, pro-democratic, pro-American governments. As one commentator put it, America's "twenty-first-century imperialism" is one "whose grace notes are free markets, human rights, and democracy, enforced by the most awesome military power the world has ever known."<sup>15</sup>

So understood, the calls for an American empire after 9/11 were not unreasonable. After all, following World War II, the United States army had taken advantage of a moment of unparalleled military might to occupy and reconstruct Germany and Japan. If America had succeeded then, how could it *not*, in the face of the incalculable threat of terrorism, do the same for the post-9/11 world? How could it not pick up the reins of Rome or Britain and undertake to civilize, modernize, and pacify the world?

After 9/11 this position was supported by a wide range of voices in the United States, including many who never embraced the term *empire* and who would probably describe themselves as intensely anti-imperialist. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman may be the most notable example. While presciently skeptical of the Bush Administration's claims of weapons of mass destruction and deeply suspicious of the role of U.S. oil interests, Friedman nevertheless defended the war in Iraq in order to "oust Saddam Hussein" and "to partner with the Iraqi people" in building a much-needed stable, democratic society with "freedom, women's empowerment, and modern education." Similarly, Michael Ignatieff, "arguably the most prominent liberal supporter of the U.S. invasion of Iraq," wrote that "[i]t remains a fact—as disagreeable to those left wingers who regard American imperialism as the root of all evil as it is to the right-wing isolationists"—"that there are many peoples who owe their freedom to an exercise of American military power."<sup>16</sup>

But what all these writers overlooked—whether they used the term *empire* or preferred to call it *democratization* and *nation*

*building*—was history. In a new form, America today faces a problem as old as empire itself, a problem so fundamental that it brought down most of history's past world-dominant powers. For lack of a better term, I will refer to this as the problem of "glue."

This problem is the subject of Samuel Huntington's controversial book *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. With an anti-politically correct vengeance, Samuel Huntington argues that continued immigration—particularly from Spanish-speaking regions like Mexico—threatens to destroy America's core "Anglo-Protestant" values of "individualism," "the work ethic," and "rule of law." Unless America reasserts its identity, Huntington warns, it may "evolve into a loose confederation of ethnic, racial, cultural, and political groups, with little or nothing in common apart from their location in the territory of what had been the United States of America."<sup>17</sup>

Huntington has been much maligned. The truth is that he almost goes out of his way to be inflammatory and insulting—suggesting, for example, that Mexican Americans are multiplying like rabbits and that they may try to take back California, Utah, and Texas. Nevertheless, I think Huntington is correct to worry about whether American society has sufficient "glue" to hold together its many different subcommunities. Many of history's past hyperpowers, including Achaemenid Persia and the Great Mongol Empire, fell because they lacked an overarching political identity capable of holding their ethnically and religiously diverse subjects together.

But Huntington makes two critical mistakes. First, as I will show, hyperpowers have fallen prey to fragmentation and disintegration precisely when their core group turns intolerant, reasserting their "true" identity, adopting nativist or chauvinist policies, and attempting to expel or exclude "aliens" and "unassimilable" groups. From this point of view, the surest path to the destruction of America's social fabric lies in efforts to tie American identity to a single, original ethnic or religious group. Perversely, this is just what Huntington is doing when he identifies America's true iden-

tity with WASP culture and WASP civic values, notwithstanding his insistence that people of any race or background (except apparently Latinos) can adopt these WASP virtues.

Even more fundamentally, Huntington fails to see that America's real problem of glue lies abroad, rather than at home. Inside its borders, the United States has been uniquely successful in creating an ethnically and religiously neutral political identity strong and capacious enough to bind together as Americans individuals of all ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds. But here's the problem: America does not exert power over only Americans. Through its unrivaled military might (including military bases in more than sixty countries, widely seen as "intrusions on national sovereignty"), its extraordinary economic leverage, and its omnipresent multinationals, consumer brands, and culture, America's dominance is felt in every corner of the world. And outside its borders, there is little if any glue binding the United States to the billions of people around the world it dominates.

History shows that hyperpowers can survive only if they find ways to command the allegiance or at least the acquiescence of the foreign populations they dominate, and for this, military force alone has never been sufficient. Imperial Rome offers perhaps the best example of a world-dominant power that succeeded in winning over key sectors of conquered populations, pulling them into Rome's orbit more effectively than mere force of arms could have done. Unique among the empires of antiquity, Rome offered a political affiliation and cultural package that was enormously appealing to far-flung, vastly different peoples. Similarly, the United States today offers a cultural package—supermodels and Starbucks, Disney and double cheeseburgers, Coca-Cola and SUVs—that holds infuriating allure for millions, if not billions, around the world.

But ancient Rome had an advantage: It could make the people it conquered and dominated part of the Roman Empire. Defeated peoples from Britain to Eastern Europe to West Africa all became subjects—and in the case of male elites, citizens—of the greatest power on earth. During the Italian Renaissance, Niccolò Machiavelli admiringly observed that Rome had "ruined her neighbors"

and created a world empire by "freely admitting strangers to her privileges and honours."<sup>18</sup>

The United States is not Rome. The first mature democracy to become a world-dominant power, the United States does not try or want to make foreign populations its subjects—and certainly not its citizens. When the U.S. government speaks of bringing democracy to the Middle East, it is not contemplating Iraqis or Syrians voting in the next U.S. presidential election. The ironic result of the United States' dual role as global hyperpower and self-proclaimed beacon of freedom and democracy is rampant anti-Americanism. Today, the United States faces billions of people around the world, most of them poor, who want to be like Americans but don't want to be under America's thumb; who want to dress and live like Americans but are denied visas by the U.S. embassy; who are told over and over that America stands for freedom but see only the American pursuit of self-interest.

Those calling for an American empire constantly invoke the glory and enduring success of the Pax Romana. But as I hope to show, in its relationship to the world it dominates, modern America is perversely far more like the "barbaric" Mongol Empire than it is like Rome.

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Social scientists have a concept called selection bias, which basically means "proving" one's thesis by picking out cases that support it and ignoring the ones that don't. I tried to avoid selection bias by casting the widest possible net and considering every society in history that could even arguably have qualified as a world-dominant power.

As a result, some of my examples of world-dominant powers—the Dutch Republic, for example—were not as clearly world-dominant as others, or arguably were not world-dominant at all. To reiterate, however, in my selection of world-dominant powers, I have consciously tried to be overinclusive rather than underinclusive, and it actually supports my thesis that the empires that came closest to world dominance also track the pattern I describe: tolerance on the rise to power and intolerance in decline.

The rest of this book is organized as follows. Part One addresses the premodern hyperpowers. Chapter One begins with Achaemenid Persia and ends with Alexander the Great. Chapter Two is about Imperial Rome. Chapter Three discusses China's Tang Empire, which in its heyday was by far the greatest power in the world and, unlike the better-known Ming dynasty, had openly hegemonic ambitions. Chapter Four examines the Great Mongol Empire.

Between antiquity and the modern era came the rise of the great religious empires: those of Christendom and Islam. Unlike the syncretic religions of antiquity, which assumed that different peoples would worship different gods, both Christianity and Islam insisted that there was one—and only one—true faith. In this sense, Christianity and Islam were inherently intolerant in a way that ancient religions were not. Whether or not sanctioned by scripture, the result was a millennium of religious strife, bloodshed, and war.

Part Two is about the enlightening of tolerance. In the West, the era of religious wars slowly gave way to the Enlightenment. For the Enlightenment thinkers, tolerance was not merely instrumental; it was a moral virtue, even a duty. Persecution was not only bad strategy; it violated the freedom of conscience. Thus was born the modern ideal of tolerance: no longer merely the prerogative of calculating monarchs, but a fundamental element of the "rights of man." The Enlightenment ended up both underwriting and undermining a new age of empires. On one hand, the new toleration would make possible the first hyperpowers Europe had seen in over a thousand years; on the other hand, with its principles of universal equality, fundamental rights, and individual liberty, the Enlightenment would make all future empires profoundly problematic.

Chapter Five takes a short look at medieval Spain as a representative pre-Enlightenment European power. Spain was remarkable for its religious diversity, including in its population significant numbers of Muslims and Jews. Yet Spain could not resist the zealotry of the time; religious pogroms, expulsions, and inquisitorial persecution wracked Spanish society, undercutting its prosperity

and making Spain a vivid illustration of how Christian intolerance prohibited the great European powers of the medieval era from attaining global dominance.

Chapter Six is about the unlikely rise of the tiny Dutch Republic, the first European state to embrace the new tolerance. In 1579, while the rest of Europe was still engulfed in fanaticism, the Dutch Republic enshrined the principle of religious freedom in its founding charter. Almost overnight, it became a magnet for religious refugees, not just from Spain but from all over Europe. As a direct result, it became far and away the richest nation on earth, with by far the most upward mobility, enjoying "productive, commercial, and financial superiority" and the "rare condition" of global "hegemony."<sup>19</sup>

Chapter Seven turns away from the West, for a comparative glimpse at three empires that never achieved world dominance: China's Ming empire, as well as two great Islamic empires, the Ottomans and the Mughals. Returning to the West, Chapter Eight discusses Great Britain, which succeeded the Dutch Republic as Europe's most tolerant society and came to rule "a vaster Empire than has ever been"<sup>20</sup>—an empire that, if one includes the oceans dominated by the British navy, covered an astonishing 70 percent of the earth's surface. But as they encountered Africans, Asians, and other nonwhites, the British hit the limit of their tolerance. However "enlightened" the British imagined themselves to be, they never overcame their colonial racism, which proved to be a profoundly destructive force throughout the empire.

Part Three takes us from the fall of the British Empire to the modern day. Chapter Nine discusses the role of tolerance in the transformation of the United States from upstart colony to global hyperpower. Chapter Ten discusses two great powers built on principles of intolerance and ethnic purity: Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. Chapter Eleven analyzes the United States' main rivals today.

Chapter Twelve applies the lessons of the past to the twenty-first century, specifically addressing the debate about an American empire. For two and a half millennia, every hyperpower in history



has faced the same two formidable challenges: maintaining the tolerance that fueled its rise and forging common bonds capable of securing the loyalty or at least quiescence of the peoples it dominates. Over the last several years, America's efforts to assert its world-dominant power abroad have exacerbated both these challenges. Ironically, it may be that America can remain a hyperpower only if it stops trying to be one.

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PART ONE

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THE TOLERANCE  
OF BARBARIANS