

A 'cosmopolitan' recipe for disaster

by Mark Burdman

Beyond American Hegemony: The Future of the Western Alliance

by David P. Calleo

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It is ironical and amusing that, at a time when the opposition in the Soviet Union has revived the Stalin-era word "cosmopolitan" to denounce the Gorbachov regime's policies, David P. Calleo would identify himself, in his introductory passages, as representing the "cosmopolitan" faction of the American policy establishment. As Calleo defines it, he and his co-thinkers are against that "national" policy faction, which seeks the "reaffirmation" of American power worldwide, to reverse current trends of decline. The battle lines are drawn: "Solutions that call for heroic changes in American character and practice seem less promising than solutions proposing that America adapt itself to the real world."

Calleo's self-identification, through the adjective "cosmopolitan," as a member of the East-West condominium known as the "Trust," tells the reader immediately that his policy prescriptions for dealing with the current crisis of American global leadership will be worse than the disease itself.

This book is not an isolated incident. It is the companion, or background piece, to an important article in the most recent edition of *Foreign Affairs*, the magazine of the New York Council on Foreign Relations. Co-authored by Calleo, *New York Times* economics writer Leonard Silk, and Harold van

Buren Cleveland, the article argues that the United States' fiscal and budgetary crises necessitate cutting American commitments around the world, especially by slashing defense spending and reaching deals with the Soviet Union.

Written before the October 1987 Black Monday crash and the December 1987 U.S.-Soviet INF treaty, the book provides the conceptual framework for the argumentation in the *Foreign Affairs* article. The latter, like the book itself, was in significant part the product of seminars funded by the German Marshall Fund and conducted at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies' Center in Bologna, Italy. The book was written for the Twentieth Century Fund, an elite "Trust" institution based in New York, which was founded in 1919 and endowed by Boston millionaire Edward A. Filene. It includes on its board of directors several well-known figures of the Establishment, including Morris B. Abram, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., August Hecksher, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Theodore C. Sorensen.

The book has been widely read and discussed in the Western European press.

Calleo's book is one of several works published in the past months by what the *New York Times* has dubbed the "school of decline" in the Anglo-American Establishment. These include Paul Kennedy's best-seller, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, and Walter Russell Mead's *Mortal Splendor: The American Empire in Transition* (see review, "Groton-Yale author mimics Soviet attack on U.S.," *EIR*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Jan. 22, 1988), and are complemented by various left-radical variations on the same theme. Included in the latter genre are several different projects now ongoing, all with the project heading, "Europe without America."

Stated simply, Calleo's thesis is that the United States, in the post-World War II period, became the "hegemon" of the

world system, a system characterized as a “Pax Americana,” replacing an earlier “Pax Britannica.” The weight of this global, imperial-type commitment has been greater than the resources available for this commitment, especially under conditions in which U.S. economic and fiscal policy has been beset by numerous follies and gimmicks under successive postwar American administrations. Now, the point has been reached that the United States can no longer sustain its levels of military spending and its pattern of commitments around the world, in particular in Europe.

Under such conditions, it is time for the U.S. Establishment, on the one side, to recognize that a new world order must come into being, a world order that could be defined as “plural,” with various centers of power. On the other side, Europe should evolve toward taking more direct responsibility for its own defense, with a “Europeanized” NATO, vectored around a French-German center-pole. If the Europeans have reservations about moving in this direction, let them contemplate the alternatives: The United States really has no choice but to pare down its NATO involvement, so if Europe does not rise to the occasion, Europe is inviting Soviet hegemony and/or chaos by its own failure to act.

As for the Soviets, the threat posed by them is being exaggerated, and, in any case, they can be contained by a combination of appeasement—a word used explicitly by Calleo on more than one occasion—and by the threat posed by having an array of irredentist and/or nuclear-armed states along their borders.

What happened to Washington and Franklin?

Calleo excludes any historical model of relations between nations other than the two alternatives of “imperial hegemonic” and “balance of power,” the latter of which his book is written to defend (and which is as imperial as the first). His book is actually an apologia for the Castlereagh/British balance-of-power policies of the post-1815 Congress of Vienna period, as (in Calleo’s view) implemented brilliantly by Bismarck in Germany in the later 19th century. As for the postwar American Establishment, his book is an endorsement of the views of appeaser George F. Kennan, who was a proponent of the “plural/balance-of-power” view in the late 1940s, and whose time has now come.

On the last page of his book, he gripes that “American history does not furnish much guidance for our present circumstances.” That cursory dismissal epitomizes a book that never even mentions names like Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and John Quincy Adams. American history, for Calleo, virtually begins with the United States, in the 20th century, becoming the vehicle for British-modeled “hegemonic-imperial” policies, following Britain’s own decline. The idea of relations based on a republican “community of principle” among nations—rather than Calleo’s focus on “pluralism,” a concept which he repeats with almost liturgical fervor—is never even considered.

By the same standard, Calleo wishfully maintains that the world will move into a “more plural order,” and the Soviets will be held at bay by the simple existence of nuclear-armed states on their border, possibly someday including the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan.

‘Toward a new age of cartels’

Calleo’s scapegoating of military commitments, as responsible for the economic and strategic crises of the United States today, also makes no sense. His line of reasoning is equivalent to a civil court judge who hears a case of drunken driving, and orders the demolition of the car as punishment.

His claim that “geopolitical efficiency” and “fiscal realities” necessitate American strategic “devolution” from Europe, is pure ideology. At one point, in a footnote, he produces figures that purport to show that \$67 billion would be saved by removing five American divisions from Europe. Interestingly, the source of this information is Washington strategist Earl Ravenal, a leftist hack who produced these figures in a study written for the libertarian/neo-conservative Cato Institute, a think tank which otherwise propounds the idea that the U.S. economy would receive a great boon by legalizing the drug trade!

Calleo asserts: “America’s European commitment is a major contributor to America’s increasingly desperate financial crisis.” In fact, some pro-Soviet liberals and leftists associated with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), involved in a so-called “Europe without America” project, received a shock during a mid-April meeting in Sweden, when they realized that it would be more “cost-effective” to leave American forces and military-logistical capabilities in Europe than to go through the enormous cost of relocating them!

Calleo can be astute, when he describes the follies of recent U.S. administrations’ economic and financial policies, but he is at a loss in defining cause-and-effect in the real physical economy. On the one side, he omits any mention of the decisions initiated in the Johnson and Nixon administrations to launch the United States on various neo-malthusian “post-industrial society” policies. On the other side, his hatred for the Reagan SDI policy blinds him to the way in which military-technological breakthroughs and their spinoffs can be a “science driver” for an economy.

Calleo concludes his book with the words: “History has come full circle: the Old World is needed to restore balance to the New.” If only the author had the slightest idea of what is so precious and unique about Europe, we would rush to endorse these words. But with all the foundation money he has received to spend hours in Bologna and other cities of Europe, this “cosmopolitan” poseur seems to have only found those traditions—balance of power, cabinet warfare, fascist economics, appeasement—that have undermined Europe over past decades, and which, if now introduced on a global scale, would ensure the end of civilization itself.