

# Stability, Stasis, and Change: *A Fragmegrating World*

*James N. Rosenau*

**C**an an unparalleled superpower committed to building a democratic world shake off a tendency to equate stability with stasis rather than with change? That is a central challenge facing the United States today. To meet the challenge, an elaborate and incisive conception of stability is required, one that joins the value and analytical dimensions of stability in such a way as to make it clear that *change is to stability and democracy as stasis is to disarray and authoritarian rule*. Only through change can democracies prosper, and only through stasis can the antidemocratic forces in the world sustain themselves and the disarray on which they thrive.<sup>1</sup>

It remains to be seen whether the United States has the wisdom and discipline to perceive, promote, and accept the necessary forms of stable change and to avoid seeking or preserving situations marked by stasis. Admittedly, in a rapidly changing world there is much that even an unparalleled superpower cannot accomplish; at the same time, there is little it can do if it lacks the conceptual equipment necessary to comprehend the transformations that are altering the course of events.

## Setting the Stage

Although the nature of democracy is often articulated in crude and simplistic terms, its essential core is well understood and serves as the basis of a widespread consensus in American thought. This cannot be said about the degrees of understanding that surround notions of stability. Everyone favors it, but few pause to explicate how they know stable situations when they see them. What is the relationship between stability and change, between stability and order, between stability and stasis? Can there be stable change or unstable order? When are stable conditions acceptable, and when are they unacceptable?

Two reasons for the lack of attention to such questions stand out. One is that globalization is vastly increasing the number of variables that conduce to a stable, orderly, and desirable world. The other concerns the nature of global leadership. With

---

*James N. Rosenau is university professor of international affairs at The George Washington University. He is the author of *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity* and *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World*, as well as the co-author of *Thinking Theory Thoroughly: Coherent Approaches to an Incoherent World*.*

its policymakers and publics conceiving of the United States as the world's only superpower, as responsible for and capable of controlling the course of events, this country is likely to be increasingly wedded to preserving stable situations and to presuming that any basic alteration in the structure of countries or situations abroad may lead to instability. Such an orientation is built into being a superpower, given that only through maintaining the prevailing global arrangements can its leadership endure. Under these circumstances, it is all too easy to take the concept of stability for granted and not be preoccupied with the need for a clear-cut conception of its constitutive elements under varying conditions.

Put differently, Americans are inclined to view threats to stability as likely anywhere, to equate global leadership with the maintenance of a stable world scene, and to be unsettled by rapid and profound change, even to see it as a threat to the country's well-being. To be sure, the United States is not unwaveringly committed to the status quo. As illustrated by recent policies toward the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and the former Yugoslavia, the United States is not averse to trying to change the arrangements prevailing in some countries or situations, but its rare efforts to alter the status quo are also cast as the obligations of superpower leadership, as actions designed to infuse an acceptable order into situations susceptible to collapsing into ever greater disarray. Such efforts are seen as promoting a more secure form of stability in place of one that violates basic democratic values or is marked by an absence of societal harmony. In other words, whether it promotes or prevents change in the name of stability, the United States tends to act without paying much, if any, conceptual attention to the dynamics that differentiate degrees and types of stability or to the long-term processes and conditions within and among societies that are likely to lessen or foster varying degrees and forms of stable change.

Viewed in this way, for example, it is not surprising that the United States failed to support the Shi'ites and Kurds toward the end of the Persian Gulf War on the grounds that a splintered Iraq would destabilize that region of the world. Likewise, the United States opposed independence for Kosovo on the grounds that stability in the Balkans would be that much harder to establish. Whatever their empirical accuracy, such presumptions are worrisome because they normally do not derive from an explicit conception of the underpinnings of stable situations, and they unknowingly tend to equate stability with order, even with stasis, thereby according it a higher status than any other values. But stability need not be the equivalent of either order or stasis. It is, rather, only one form of order, a dynamic form, and it surely is not stasis if by stasis is meant a standing still and the absence of change.

Given the potential for misreadings of policy situations based on an underdeveloped and complex concept, it is plainly time to return to the conceptual drawing board and unpack the concepts of stability, change, and order in the process of tracing the impact of globalization and the probable directions in which world affairs are headed. The task is not easy. One could fall back on equilibrium theory and extrapolate likely future trends, but such an approach seems too simple in the current milieu. There are just too many ambiguities and contradictions in the emergent epoch to proceed in the usual ways, especially as the contradictions and uncertainties are multiplying as the pace of change accelerates exponentially. If this is so, and if it is also the case that in

many ways the course of events is out of control and possibly headed toward dire outcomes, then it is all the more important that a nuanced return to the drawing board be undertaken and that temptations to simplify the dynamics of stability and change be resisted. In short, it is necessary to ponder the links between stability and stasis, between change and continuity, between dynamics and inertia, between macro collectivities and micro individuals, and between globalizing and localizing forces.

## Fragegration

The most all-encompassing of these polarities involves the links between the globalizing and localizing dynamics that are propelling the course of events everywhere. My label for these interactions is *fragegration*<sup>2</sup>—a contrived word designed to capture in a single phrase the fragmentation-integration, localization-globalization, and decentralization-centralization tensions so pervasive throughout the world that it can fairly be said the present age is not one of globalization, but one of *fragegration*.<sup>3</sup> Just as it is fruitless to assess whether the chicken or the egg came first, it matters little whether globalizing forces have been the driving forces of history and localizing forces merely reactions to them, or vice versa. The point is that today, the two are inextricably linked.

More specifically, such a perspective treats the world as short on clear-cut boundaries that differentiate domestic and foreign affairs, with the result that local problems often become transnational in scope even as global challenges have repercussions for small communities.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the multiplicity of opposites, of contradictions that promote tension, are so pervasive that one can discern *fragegrative* dynamics in virtually any situation at every level, from the individual to the local community to the national state to the global system. Among the more conspicuous of these dynamics are the tensions between core and periphery, between national and transnational systems, between communitarianism and cosmopolitanism, between cultures and subcultures, between states and markets, between territory and cyberspace, between decentralization and centralization, between universalism and particularism, between flow and closure, between pace and space, between self and other, and between the distant and the proximate. Each of these tensions is marked by numerous variants; they take different forms in different parts of the world, in different countries, in different markets, in different communities, in different professions, and in different cyberspaces, with the result that there is enormous diversity in the way people experience the tensions that beset their lives.

In our heavily wired world, the integrating and fragmenting events usually occur simultaneously. Moreover, they often are causally related, with the causal links tending to cumulate and to generate a momentum such that integrative increments tend to give rise to disintegrative increments, and vice versa. This momentum highlights the pervasiveness of the interactive foundations of the diverse tensions. The simultaneity of the good and the bad, the integrative and the disintegrative, and the coherent and the incoherent lies at the heart of global affairs today. As one analyst puts it, “. . . the distinction between the global and the local is becoming very complex and problematic.”<sup>5</sup>

Nor have the contradictions of the emergent epoch escaped the attention of publics. With the fragmenting forces of localization and the integrating dynamics of globalization so interwoven as to be products of each other, people have become increasingly aware of how fragmentation has intensified old identities and fostered new ones. However they may articulate their understanding, individuals everywhere have come to expect that the advance of globalization poses threats to longstanding local and national ties, that some groups will contest, even violently fight, the intrusion of global norms even as others will seek to obtain goods, larger market shares, or generalized support beyond their communities.

The forces of fragmentation are rooted in the psychic comfort people derive from the familiar, close-at-hand values and practices of their neighborhoods, just as the forces of integration stem from people's aspirations to benefit from the distant products of the global economy, to realize the efficiencies of regional unity, to counter environmental degradation, to achieve coherent communities through policies of inclusion that expand their democratic institutions, and to acknowledge the meaning of the pictures taken in outer space that depict the Earth as a solitary entity in a huge universe. In the succinct words of one astute observer, "There is a constant struggle between the collectivist and individualist elements within each human."<sup>6</sup>

Like stability, the concepts of integration and fragmentation are not as self-evident as may seem to be the case at first glance. Most notably, a distinction needs to be drawn that allows for the many situations in which actions foster both the integration of a system and the fragmentation of its subsystems, and vice versa. When integration occurs at both levels, it can be regarded as "progress-enhancing integration," whereas "strife-enhancing integration" marks those situations when integration occurs at only one of the levels while the other undergoes fragmentation. The former is illustrated by the European Union and its subsidiary principle that facilitates Union-wide integration while at the same time enabling individual countries to maintain their own practices and authority when necessary. On the other hand, strife-enhancing integration was evident in the recent Austrian elections, which resulted in divisiveness for the country even as it solidified the victorious parties. Similarly, the Cold War was integrative for each of the two warring coalitions even as it intensified the antagonisms between them. Lastly, in "strife-enhancing fragmentation," both a system and its subsystems undergo fragmentation.<sup>7</sup> A good example is the prolonged and intense conflict in Northern Ireland, which fostered fragmentation as well as dissension within its Catholic and Protestant factions.

## Stability

Given pervasive contradictions, tensions, and ambiguities at every level of community, the need to sort through and rethink the concept of stability as it pertains to world affairs is compelling. The puzzles are numerous: How is stability distinguishable from order? What conditions obtain when individuals, communities, organizations, states, regions, and the global system are judged to be stable or unstable? Does instability set in as some of the authority of nation-states undergoes disaggregation upward to transnational entities, sideward to social movements and nongovernmental

organizations (NGOs), and downward to subnational entities? Can the concepts of stability and instability be framed in such a way that they can be applied to individuals as well as to collectivities, and, if so, is stability at the micro level of individuals a prerequisite for stability at the macro level of collectivities, and vice versa?

It is important to recognize, first, that most of the time both individuals and collectivities undergo change. The pace at which change occurs—such as the degree of aging and the extent of movement toward or away from goals—can vary considerably, from infinitesimal to incremental to abrupt. Second, it follows that stability is a form of change and that what counts is whether the change is acceptable or unacceptable and whether it contributes to or detracts from the system's coherence and capacity to endure.

It follows that it is possible to distinguish between two dimensions of stability. One is its value dimension, which involves the degree to which the prevailing stability or instability is judged to be acceptable. The other is its analytical dimension, by which is meant the extent to which the prevailing stability or instability is assessed to be marked by systemic coherence, by being able to persist through time more or less intact (that is, to be sufficiently coherent to overcome internal conflicts such that goals can be framed, decisions made, and policies implemented). The distinction between the two dimensions is not easily sustained, however. Perhaps as often as not, the two dimensions are at odds, thus making it all too easy to confound—to shift unknowingly back and forth between—them when assessing situations from a liberal democratic perspective. Not infrequently, for example, a coherent system lacking in basic democratic practices has been treated as acceptable, just as a democratic system on the brink of collapse has been regarded as unacceptable, with the former then being assessed as a desirable order and the latter as a noxious disorder. The readiness of the United States to support authoritarian systems during the Cold War is illustrative of how undemocratic systems can be viewed as acceptable, and the current U.S. concern about the potential for civil war in Colombia exemplifies how a certain type of democratic system can be seen as a noxious and unacceptable disorder.

In other words, sustaining the analytical-value distinction is difficult because order and stability overlap and because they are both value-laden and analytical concepts. Order refers to the conditions and structural arrangements that prevail in any situation at a given time, and these conditions can be either stable or unstable, depending on the values of those who assess them. One observer's stable order may be another's unstable disorder in the sense that what may be judged to be a disorderly system is nonetheless founded on a set of underlying structural arrangements that shape how its people and collectivities interact with each other, even if impulse and violence mark their interactions. Treating disorder as a form of order in this way serves to limit the overlap by holding constant the value problem associated with the concept of order.<sup>8</sup> It facilitates conceiving of stability and instability as subcategories of order, thereby reducing the value problem to the distinction between degrees of acceptable stability and unacceptable instability.

This remaining value problem, however, is no small challenge. Although detached analytical criteria for delineating between stable and unstable systems can be developed in terms of their capacity to remain coherent and durable, the criteria are

bound to derive from values that shape what is viewed as acceptable or unacceptable in any situation. Here the value foundations are conceived to consist of two clusters that may or may not be mutually reinforcing. As indicated earlier, one cluster is composed of the various values associated with the premises and processes of liberal democracies, while the other is comprised of the values linked to system coherence that allow for movement toward goals. In what follows, “acceptable stability” is viewed as characterizing coherent systems that protect or promote democratic procedures, while “unacceptable stability” or “instability” is judged to prevail when a system does not promote democratic practices and is unable to sustain its coherence without relying on high degrees of coercion.

There are two difficulties here, however. One, the question of whose judgment of acceptability is involved, is the easier to resolve. The other, by contrast, is endlessly perplexing and probably not subject to a satisfactory resolution. This is the problem of how to assess acceptability when analyzing situations either where systemic coherence and undemocratic procedures are judged to prevail or where democratic processes are judged to be operative in deteriorating systems that are increasingly short on coherence. Other things being equal, the resolution of these dilemmas may be to treat democratic practices as more acceptable than systemic coherence when a choice between the two cannot be avoided.

The 1999 situations in Pakistan and East Timor are illustrative in this regard. In the former case, a corrupt and deteriorating democratic system was overthrown by a military coup that initially appeared to have substantially reduced disarray and restored a goodly measure of systemic coherence acceptable to many Pakistanis. But was this an acceptable or unacceptable stability? My answer reflects the inapplicability of a hard-and-fast rule: in the very short term, the coup appeared to have laid the foundation for a return to a more effective democracy, but in the long term, or even the medium term, stability in Pakistan requires the reestablishment of democratic procedures. The longer military rule prevails in the country, in other words, the more are the prevailing arrangements judged to be an unacceptable form of stability, a conclusion that is consistent with the positions voiced by U.S. foreign policy officials at the time and shared soon thereafter by the people of Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> In the case of East Timor, on the other hand, not even a brief period of systemic coherence followed the electoral coup. Coherence had been maintained by Indonesia, and East Timor collapsed into sheer disarray when its public successfully demanded independence. From a liberal democratic perspective, both the pre- and the post-independence arrangements in East Timor were unacceptable, which is why members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council felt compelled to authorize UN forces to take over the duties of governance in the situation.

These examples highlight the question of whose criteria are employed when judgments of acceptability are applied to systems or situations. It is misleading to infer from the U.S. and UN assessments in the Pakistan and East Timor cases that the only criteria of acceptability that count are those employed by the actors making such judgments, be they officials in the public domain, observers in the private world, or the top echelons of the U.S. military. For in both the U.S. and UN policy establishments—not to mention those elsewhere in the world and among military officers as

well—there are officials and observers who rely on different sets of priorities and arrive at different syntheses.

How, then, to answer the acceptable-to-whom question in using the concept of acceptability as a measure of stability? Given the absence of a consensus in particular circumstances, the answer lies with the individuals making the stability assessments or, in the case of collective agencies such as governments, in the official policies pursued or advocated by the interested parties. A situation may provoke divided assessments within an agency, and these divisions can be duly noted; however, what counts is whose criteria ultimately prevail in judging its acceptability.

In sum, my guidelines for differentiating between stable and unstable situations in world affairs involve both an analytical and a value dimension, with the former focusing on degrees of systemic coherence and the latter focusing on degrees of acceptability. Figure 1 presents a 2x2 matrix that highlights this distinction between these two dimensions. The entries in the cells are examples drawn from my own values and analytical judgments about contemporary systems or situations. Assuming the distinctions between high and low system coherence and between acceptable and unacceptable situations are adequately operationalized (a task not undertaken here), any policies of governments or assessments of observers can be readily classified in one of the cells, thus providing a first cut at locating what are considered to be the stable and unstable features of the world scene. Second and third cuts are suggested below by identifying four structures of stability and four paces at which situations may or may not change.

**Figure 1. Stability along Two Dimensions**

		VALUE DIMENSION	
		Acceptable	Unacceptable
ANALYTICAL DIMENSION	High System Coherence	–Chinese reforms –European Union	–Burma –North Korea
	Low System Coherence	–Indonesia –Russia	–Kosovo –Apartheid in South Africa

The four structures of stability are conceived to consist of those that develop at the level of individuals (micro stability), those that prevail within collectivities (macro stability), those that persist among both individuals and collectivities (micro-macro stability), and those that operate among collectivities (macro-macro stability). All four structures have a common quality. All are based on the premise that stability consists of acceptable change, with change being conceived as alterations between two points in time and with acceptable change being viewed as any alterations that

are not characterized by low system coherence and do not generate widespread efforts to resist, prevent, or undo them.

It is here where complexity and nuance become central: distinctions have to be drawn between the priorities that are attached to the analytical and value dimensions of change by each stability structure. Most notably, different consequences can follow when change is differentially accepted at the micro level on the one hand and the other three levels on the other hand. More often than not, the perception of unacceptable change at the micro level will not be matched by a similar perception among ruling elites and governments at the macro and macro-macro levels because the latter tend to accord higher priority to systemic coherence than to the value dimension of stability. Only when micro-macro structures become operative and sizable publics press their values on governments—as was the case with apartheid in South Africa or with Elián González, the Cuban 6-year-old rescued at sea—does a prevailing situation become defined as both a threat to systemic coherence and an unacceptable situation in terms of values. In most situations, publics are uninterested in or oblivious to the acceptability of distant situations and thus do not become preoccupied with change and stability elsewhere in the world. But at least some elites and government agencies are charged with being sensitive to low-system coherence abroad and thus may be quick to perceive unacceptable stability. From the superpower perspective of U.S. officials, for example, the world is pervaded with numerous situations that appear susceptible to undermining national security and call for efforts to resist, prevent, or undo them.

It follows that whatever may be the pace of change, global stability prevails as long as the change is widely acceptable at the micro level of individuals, the macro level of collectivities and their leaders, and the macro-macro level of other collectivities. It is here where complexity and nuance again become pivotal. Global stability is rare because only infrequently are any of the rates of change acceptable to most actors at every level. The advent of global television exemplifies an abrupt change that did not undermine global stability because it was widely accepted by people and collectivities everywhere. On the other hand, the abrupt changes that accompany successful revolutions or invasions are likely to be widely accepted at the micro level of the revolutionaries and invaders and the macro level of their collectivities, but at the same time such changes will foster macro-macro instability if other countries view the revolution or invasion as a threat to systemic coherence and undertake to reverse it. Likewise, infinitesimal or incremental economic growth will be acceptable to those with vested interests in the growth at micro and macro levels, but such change is likely to be unacceptable to the poor (and their spokespersons), who do not participate in the processes of growth. In addition, the more infinitesimal change borders on the absence of change (as may be the case in highly authoritarian regimes that prevent change), and stasis can be said to prevail—although in all likelihood it will not prevail for long because in the emergent epoch, stasis runs against the grain of individuals, who will become restless and aspire to at least a modicum of change the more the stasis persists and the less responsive are their society's institutions.

Although no effort is made here to operationalize clear-cut measures for differentiating infinitesimal, incremental, and abrupt change, the distinctions are hardly triv-

ial. *Infinitesimal* change is just barely noticeable. It is rooted in the tendencies of collectivities toward inertia and of individuals toward habit, with the result that a high degree of certainty will prevail wherever and whenever infinitesimal change is occurring. Infinitesimal change is also likely to be accompanied by a resistance to the acceleration of change and thus amounts to a form of stability that is marked by inequalities, exploitation, and the absence of meaningful progress. *Incremental* change, on the other hand, involves steady and discernible movement toward the goals of individuals and collectivities. The more incremental the change, the less will be the uncertainty and the greater will be the stability of people and collectivities. *Abrupt* change is sharp, extensive, and subject to volatile shifts in direction. Consequently, the more abrupt and explosive the changes, the more will people and collectivities experience uncertainty over the likelihood of high systemic coherence and thus the less acceptable will be such changes. In short, it is possible to conceive of a stability-instability continuum on which the location of individuals and collectivities is defined by the degree to which acceptable or unacceptable change is fostered in their daily routines.

Given this linking of stability to change, it is clear that stability exists when most individuals accept, either by explicitly welcoming or implicitly acknowledging, that progress and movement toward goals are occurring without also fostering low system coherence. On the contrary, instability exists when any changes unfold in the opposite direction, when most persons resist or reject the goals being sought and perceive a decline of high system coherence. The locales in a collectivity, a region, or the world that are stable and those that are unstable are determined by applying the same criteria. Variability along these lines, of course, is the norm in world affairs.

Table 1 permits an elaboration on the value and analytical dimensions of stability. Employing the value and system coherence criteria to assess acceptable or unacceptable systems or situations on the current world scene, table 1 makes clear that, irrespective of the pace of change or the structure of stability, some situations are acceptable and some are not, depending on the value and analytical perspectives that different observers bring to bear. Change is considered noxious when it is perceived as undermining the well-being of people and/or the coherence of their collectivities by perpetuating poverty, racial prejudice, and a host of other injustices at the individual level or by jeopardizing systemic coherence at the collective level. In this sense, the processes that sustain some stable macro structures ought to be rendered unstable from a value perspective. (South Africa under apartheid comes quickly to mind.) Likewise, if change involves movement in noxious directions (for example, the advent of authoritarian regimes or the collapse of economies), there is reason for concern.

On the other hand, change is beneficial and acceptable when it enlarges the well-being and competence of individuals and communities, thereby leading to the improvement of the human condition and to higher system coherence. Viewed in this way, neither unstable nor uncertain situations need be feared by policymakers if they involve steady movement toward goals marked by fluctuations within an acceptable range. In short, as indicated earlier, change can be a dynamic form of stability or instability, one that allows for progress on the part of communities and their members or for a deterioration of their circumstances. Table 1 suggests that under certain con-

ditions even stasis may be acceptable, although it can also serve as a bulwark against change that might lead to even more satisfying conditions.

**Table 1. Stability and Instability in World Affairs: Examples from the 1990s**

<i>Pace of Change</i>		<i>Stability Structure</i>			
		<i>Micro</i>	<i>Macro</i>	<i>Macro–Macro</i>	<i>Micro–Macro</i>
Stasis	U	Vigilantes	North Korea	Arms trade	Burma
Infinitesimal change	A	Patriotism	Japanese culture	U.S.–British relations	Post-war Bosnia
	U	Drug consumption	Colombia	Middle East decline of populations	Northern Ireland
	A	Decline of AIDS	Iran		Human rights
Incremental change	U	Rich–poor gap	Russia	UN financing	Afghanistan
	A	Emergence of Chinese middle class	Spread of democracy	International election monitoring	European Union
Abrupt change	U	Flight of refugees	East Timor	Nuclear proliferation	Asian financial crisis
	A	Fall of the Berlin Wall	Collapse of the Soviet Union	End of Cold War	End of Apartheid in South Africa

**Key:** A, acceptable; U, unacceptable.

On the other hand, change is beneficial and acceptable when it enlarges the well-being and competence of individuals and communities, thereby leading to the improvement of the human condition and to higher system coherence. Viewed in this way, neither unstable nor uncertain situations need be feared by policymakers if they involve steady movement toward goals marked by fluctuations within an acceptable range. In short, as indicated earlier, change can be a dynamic form of stability or instability, one that allows for progress on the part of communities and their members or for a deterioration of their circumstances. Table 1 suggests that under certain conditions even stasis may be acceptable, although it can also serve as a bulwark against change that might lead to even more satisfying conditions.

Also implied in the foregoing discussion is the large degree to which stability and change are part and parcel of the close links between collectivities at the macro level and individuals at the micro level. Exceptions aside, these links are often symmetrical in the sense that changes at one level can generate comparable changes at other levels. Cases of abrupt change are most conspicuous in this regard: the instability that

accompanies unacceptable abrupt change at one level is likely to precipitate parallel changes at other levels. Iraq's abrupt invasion of Kuwait in 1990, for example, disrupted the prevailing macro-macro stability and generated abrupt macro change on the part of the countries that joined to form the 32-nation coalition to reverse the situation. Similarly, incremental and progressive change at one level is likely to be matched by acceptable change at other levels, as is illustrated by, say, those situations in which close links are established between domestic publics and governmental policies over environmental regulations. In general, therefore, it is reasonable to presume that comparable and symmetrical degrees of change and stability among collectivities and people go hand in hand, each reinforcing the other.

There are, however, important exceptions to this rule. As previously noted, the most conspicuous asymmetry occurs when individuals at the micro level are oblivious to or unconcerned about distant situations even as their governments may nevertheless perceive some of them as threatening a diminution of system coherence and act to prevent further deterioration. Similarly, incremental micro changes can, on occasion, foster abrupt macro changes. For instance, one analyst who studied the micro level in the United States over three decades "finally" found that

. . . societies learn and react differently than individuals. Surprisingly, social learning is often far more abrupt than individual learning. It is more extreme. It is less incremental . . . [A] typical pattern of social change starts with a sharp lurch in the opposite direction which is then followed by a complex series of modifications based on trial and error learning. . . . We have found that two factors usually precipitate such lurches: a change in circumstances and a lack of responsiveness to the change on the part of institutions.<sup>10</sup>

## **Fragmegrative Sources of Stability and Change**

One way to portray the sources and consequences of fragementation succinctly is to note four flows of influence that shape the underpinnings of fragementative changes and tensions: (1) a technological revolution has facilitated the rapid flow of ideas, information, pictures, and money across continents; (2) a transportation revolution has hastened the boundary-spanning flow of elites, ordinary folk, and whole populations; (3) an organizational revolution has shifted the flow of authority, influence, and power beyond traditional boundaries; and (4) an economic revolution has redirected the flow of goods, services, capital, and ownership among countries. Taken together, these flows have fostered a cumulative process that is both the source and consequence of eroding boundaries, integrating regions, proliferating networks, diminishing territorial attachments, coalescing social movements, weakening states, contracting sovereignty, dispersing authority, demanding publics, and expanding citizen skills—all of which also serve to generate counterreactions intended to contest, contain, or reverse the multiple flows and thereby preserve communities and reduce inequities. While each of these sources is powerful, none of them can be listed as primary. They are all interactive, and each reinforces the others. None is sufficient, but all are necessary to sustain the age of fragementation.

Among the substantial number and variety of sources that sustain fragegrative processes and flows, eight are especially noteworthy inasmuch as they serve to illustrate the ways in which the structures of stability are shaped by the dynamics of fragegration (table 2). One of these sources consists of “the skill revolution,” wherein people everywhere are increasingly able to construct scenarios that trace the course of distant events back into their homes and pocketbooks.<sup>11</sup> A second source involves the large degree to which collectivities around the world are undergoing authority crises, by which is meant the paralysis and stalemates that prevent them from framing and moving toward their goals.<sup>12</sup> A third focuses on the bifurcation of global structures whereby the long-standing state-centric world now has a rival in an emergent multicentric world of diverse actors such as ethnic minorities, NGOs, professional societies, transnational corporations, and the many other types of private collectivities that now crowd the global stage.<sup>13</sup> A fourth is the “organizational explosion” that has witnessed a huge proliferation of associations and networks at every level of community.<sup>14</sup> A fifth is the “mobility upheaval,” by which is meant the vast and ever-growing movement of people around the world, a movement that includes everyone from the tourist to the terrorist and from the jet-setter to the immigrant.<sup>15</sup> A sixth consists of the many micro-electronic and transportation technologies that have collapsed time and space.<sup>16</sup> A seventh involves the complex processes through which territoriality, states, and sovereignty have weakened to the point where it can be reasonably asserted that landscapes have been supplemented—and in some cases replaced—by mediascapes, finanscapes, technoscapes, ethnoscapes, and ideoscapes.<sup>17</sup> An eighth concerns the large degree to which national economies have been globalized.<sup>18</sup>

## Unstable Responses to Fragegrative Tensions

The enormous analytical challenge posed by how these eight major dynamics (and the many others that could be identified) interactively generate and sustain fragegration is suggested in table 2. The rows of the table list the eight dynamics, and the entries in the cells indicate the diverse ways in which the sources of fragegration can significantly shape the four structures of stability listed in table 1. In some instances, their impact fosters further integration; in other instances, they add to the processes of fragmentation. Indeed, although not easily depicted in the table, each of the dynamics is likely to have both integrating and fragmenting consequences. For present purposes, however, table 2 serves to make clear that the obstacles to stable change are considerable and that each of the structures of stability is vulnerable to a variety of undermining influences. Stated differently, unstable situations around the world that portend low system coherence or are otherwise unacceptable are in large part a consequence of the dynamics whereby ordinary folk, elites, collectivities, and global structures respond to and sustain the conflicting pressures in global and local directions. More than that, in often subtle and circuitous ways, the stability at each level of aggregation is affected by the ways in which actors at the other levels cope with fragegrative tensions.

### ***Micro Actors: Ordinary Folk***

Table 2 also makes clear that people at the micro level—citizens and aliens, consumers and investors, migrants and workers, rural peasants and computer technicians, the poor and the wealthy—are under assault by fragmenting dynamics. For some, the assault is destabilizing in the sense that longstanding habits and affiliations are challenged; for others, it has beneficial consequences in the sense that their enhanced skills enable them to form and to join organizations, to shoulder new responsibilities, and to aspire to new accomplishments. In other words, many subtleties accompany the impact of fragmenting dynamics at the micro level. None of them has singularly stabilizing or destabilizing consequences, but all of them can serve both to promote and to undermine the stability of the lives and routines of ordinary people. For our purposes, then, it is useful to identify the ways in which the dynamics of the emergent epoch may foster abrupt or incremental changes at the micro level that are sufficiently widespread to feed into the behavior of collectivities at the macro and macro-macro levels. Every individual everywhere probably experiences one or more consequences of the clash between globalizing and localizing forces, but these consequences become meaningful only in terms of micro instabilities that cumulate and result in collective unease or action to which policymakers must attend.

Perhaps the most destabilizing consequences of fragmentation at the micro level that can cumulate into a powerful collective force are the insecurities that stem from the many rapid and bewildering transformations engendered by fragmenting dynamics. With their worlds turned upside-down by the multiple flows of ideas, goods, people, crime, drugs, and pollution that are part and parcel of the emergent epoch, numerous people experience an uprooting of their daily routines. They feel lost and threatened by the changes that accompany a global economy and a collapse of time and space. Often, they cope with this sense of loss by seeking comfort through religion, by joining labor unions, by supporting protest organizations, by clinging ever more fervently to local mores and norms, and by a host of other means of valuing the local and rejecting the global. When such reactions and fears are aggregated into collective action through the mobilizing efforts of elites, they result in abrupt changes that can roil societies and become salient pockets of instability on the world stage. The Iranian revolution of 1979 is an example of this potential for instability, as are secession movements in the former Soviet Union, Indonesia, and elsewhere. In such cases, support at the micro level of mass publics can be abruptly generated by leaders who, for various reasons and by means of diverse techniques, are able to tap into people's need for a sense of belonging. Given an epoch marked by a skill revolution, an organizational explosion, and weakened states, it is hardly surprising that micro-macro dynamics underlie a rapid proliferation of secessionist movements that, from a U.S. perspective, loom as serious pockets of instability.

**Table 2. Stability and Instability in World Affairs: Examples from the 1990s**

<i>Consequences of Fragmegration</i>	<i>Stability Structures</i>		
	<i>Micro</i>	<i>Macro</i>	<i>Macro-Macro</i> <i>Micro-Macro</i>
Skill Revolution	Expands people's horizons on a global scale; sensitizes them to new meanings of security; facilitates a reversion to local concerns.	Enlarges the capacity of government agencies to think "out of the box" and analyze security challenges.	Multiplies quantity and enhances quality of links among states; solidifies their alliances and enmities.
Authority Crises	Redirect loyalties; encourage individuals to replace traditional criteria of legitimacy with performance criteria.	Weaken ability of governments and other organizations to frame and implement policies.	Enlarge the competence of some International Government Organizations and NGOs; stall diplomatic negotiations.
Bifurcation of Global Structures	Adds to role conflicts, divides loyalties, and foments tensions among individuals; encourages local preoccupations.	Facilitates formation and consolidation of collectivities in the multicentric world.	Generates institutional arrangements for cooperation on major global issues such as trade and the environment.
Organizational Explosion	Facilitates multiple identities, subgroupism, and affiliation with transnational advocacy networks.	Enables opposition groups to form and press for altered policies; divides publics from their elites.	Contributes to the pluralism of authority; heightens the probability of authority crises.
			Facilitate the capacity of publics to press and/or paralyze their governments, the World Trade Organization, and other organizations.
			Provides opportunities for special interests to pursue influence through diverse channels.

**Table 2. Stability and Instability in World Affairs: Examples from the 1990s (continued)**

	<i>Stability Structures</i>		
	<i>Micro</i>	<i>Macro</i>	<i>Macro-Macro</i>
<i>Consequences of Fragmentation</i>			
Mobility Upheaval	Provides people with more extensive contacts with foreign cultures; contributes to both hate of and fondness for the United States.	Enlarges the size and relevance of subcultures and ethnic conflicts as people seek new opportunities abroad.	Heightens need for international cooperation to control the flow of drugs, money, and terrorists.
Microelectronic Technologies	Enable like-minded people anywhere in the world to be in touch with each other.	Empower governments to mobilize support; render their secrets vulnerable to spying.	Accelerate diplomatic processes; facilitate electronic surveillance and intelligence work.
Weakening of Territoriality, States, and Sovereignty	Undermines national loyalties and increases distrust of governments and other institutions.	Adds to the porosity of national boundaries and the difficulty of formulating national policies.	Increases need for interstate cooperation on global issues; lessens control over cascading events.
339	Swells ranks of consumers; promotes uniform tastes; heightens anxiety about jobs.	Complicates tasks of state governments vis-à-vis markets; promotes business alliances.	Intensifies trade and investment conflicts; generates incentives for building global financial institutions.
			Increases movement across borders that lessens capacity of governments to control national boundaries.
			Constrain governments by enabling opposition groups to mobilize more effectively.
			Lessens confidence in governments; renders a nationwide consensus difficult to achieve and maintain.
			Increases efforts to protect local cultures and industries; facilitates vigor of protest movements.

Abrupt changes at the micro level are not always the result of gifted leaders or demagogues. Sometimes circumstances evolve in such a way that multitudes of individuals react abruptly in the same way without prior provocation by their leaders and, in so doing, create as much instability at the macro level as is the case when publics are mobilized. The sudden flight of refugees responding to a shared fear of pending aggression is a frequent instance of unstable situations that evolve swiftly out of uncoordinated micro actions. A sharp collapse of a currency or stock market is another case in point. As investors and traders interpret new economic data as portending problems ahead, so will their separate acts of withdrawing investments, selling stock, or trading currencies conduce to macro instabilities.

The aggregation of individuals in the absence of mobilization by leaders does not always result in abrupt change. Often the aggregation occurs incrementally, as more and more people are induced to move in the same direction with the passage of time. When fearful reactions spread widely through incremental change that eventually cumulates to the point where large numbers of people are in distress and thus potentially prepared for mobilization, they may well evoke responses from their government at the macro level that, in turn, create an unstable situation. The Falun Gong movement in China is a recent instance of incremental and spontaneous micro aggregation in response to a perceived need for spiritual guidance to cope with the complexities of globalization that gave rise to an unstable situation. As Chinese leaders came to view the movement as a threat to their party's rule and their country's stability, they clamped down on it and fulfilled their own prophecy of instability. Much the same can be said about the massacre at Tiananmen Square in 1989. It, too, was precipitated by uncoordinated individual actions that ultimately cumulated in a mass movement that macro leaders felt obliged to suppress.

In sum, there are many routes through which developments can be unacceptable at the micro level of individuals and thus generate unstable macro or macro-macro circumstances. Indeed, it can reasonably be anticipated that in the present era, the unease fostered by globalizing dynamics, combined with the skill revolution and the organizational explosion, will increase the prospects for collective action and generate an ever greater number of diverse situations marked by instability. This conclusion renders ever more difficult the task of policymakers charged with being sensitive to patterns that can get out of hand and foster low system coherence elsewhere in the world. It means that their analytical antennae must be as geared to the grassroots as to the more easily comprehended threats that may evolve at the macro level of governments and societies.

### ***Micro Actors: Elites***

Although elites—politicians, business executives, labor leaders, NGO heads, journalists, intellectuals, entertainers, sports stars, and those in many other fields of endeavor—could be considered macro actors inasmuch as they normally speak and act on behalf of the concerns of macro collectivities, they are best regarded as individuals with aspirations, fears, and commitments that are responsive to fragmegrative dynamics. As elites, cosmopolitans, or symbolic analysts (as they are sometimes called), they are the individuals who form and sustain the micro-macro links and thus

need to be separately assessed. It is they who sustain and often initiate the processes whereby authority undergoes disaggregation and change, who worry about the stability of situations, who calculate whether events are tending toward low system maintenance, and who seek to guide or to mobilize ordinary folk in directions derived from their values and leadership roles. Their worries, calculations, and leadership may be sound or inaccurate, appropriate or inappropriate, constructive or counterproductive, sufficient or inadequate, but in any event, their actions substantially shape the course of world affairs.

Surprisingly, very little systematic knowledge is available about the activities, orientations, affiliations, and loyalties of the elites on the cutting edge of globalization and fragmentation. As indicated by the quotations listed later, it is easy to gather numerous seemingly astute observations about what is transpiring in elite circles, but all such commentaries are essentially impressionistic.<sup>19</sup> Investigators have yet to undertake the extensive systematic surveys of cosmopolitans who straddle the globalizing-localizing divide comparable to those of national elites that were compiled in earlier eras. It would be helpful, for example, if systematic studies of those who attend the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, or of the 25,986 persons from 37 countries who flew at least 100,000 miles on United Airlines in 1995 were conducted,<sup>20</sup> but efforts to raise funds for such studies have been unsuccessful, and thus one has to fall back on undocumented, varied, and contradictory (but often not implausible) impressions.<sup>21</sup>

One recurring theme in these impressionistic commentaries stands out as highly relevant to fragmenting dynamics if it turns out to be supported by systematic data. It is that many elites supportive of globalizing processes may be increasingly cut off from the larger societies in which they live and work. Their global networks and responsibilities appear to be weakening their ties to their home communities and their countries, leading them to reside in gated enclaves when they return to their families, to give resources to transnational organizations rather than local charities, and to see themselves as jet-setters whose field of play is global rather than national or local in scope. Consequently, they see themselves either as citizens of the world or, perhaps more frequently, as lacking any meaningful citizenship. Some observers contend that in particular subsets of leaders, an insulated subculture may be evolving that is new, consequential, and—most important—apart from any extant cultures. An example of speculation along these lines is plainly evident in this interpretation of a particular subculture that may be developing among leaders who attend the annual meetings of the World Economic Forum:

Participants in this culture know how to deal with computers, cellular phones, airline schedules, currency exchange, and the like. But they also dress alike, exhibit the same amicable informality, relieve tensions by similar attempts at humor, and of course most of them interact in English. Since most of these cultural traits are of Western (and mostly American) provenance, individuals coming from different backgrounds must go through a process of socialization that will allow them to engage in this behavior with seemingly effortless spontaneity. . . . But it would be a mistake to think that the “Davos culture” operates only in the offices, boardrooms, and hotel

suites in which international business is transacted. It carries over into the lifestyles and presumably also the values of those who participate in it. Thus, for example, the frenetic pace of contemporary business is carried over into the leisure activities and the family life of business people. There is a yuppie style in the corporation, but also in the body-building studio and in the bedroom. And notions of costs, benefits, and maximization spill over from work into private life. The “Davos culture” is a culture of the elite and . . . of those aspiring to join the elite. Its principal social location is in the business world, but since elites intermingle, it also affects at least the political elites. There is, as it were, a yuppie internationale.<sup>22</sup>

Assuming there is more than a little truth in the notion of global elite subcultures, what might be the consequences insofar as the stability of the situations that mark the world scene at any moment in time? One obvious answer is that such subcultures might serve to disrupt, distort, attenuate, or otherwise intrude upon micro-macro interactions, thus adding to the instability of situations where unease is widespread among ordinary folk. Some analysts are deeply troubled by this possibility, even though they do not cast it as a source of potential instability:

Without national attachments . . . people have little inclination to make sacrifices or to accept responsibility for their actions. . . . The new elites are at home only in transit, en route to a high-level conference, to the grand opening of a new franchise, to an international film festival, or to an undiscovered resort. Theirs is essentially a tourist’s view of the world—not a perspective likely to encourage a passionate devotion to democracy. . . . To an alarming extent the privileged classes . . . have made themselves independent not only of crumbling industrial cities but [also] of public services in general. . . . In effect, they have removed themselves from the common life. . . . Many of them have ceased to think of themselves as Americans in any important sense, implicated in America’s destiny for better or worse. Their ties to an international culture of work and leisure . . . make many of them deeply indifferent to the prospect of American national decline.<sup>23</sup>

But will the cosmopolitan with a global perspective choose to act fairly and compassionately? Will our current and future symbolic analysts—lacking any special sense of responsibility toward a particular nation and its citizens—share their wealth with the less fortunate of the world and devote their resources and energies to improving the chances that others may contribute to the world’s wealth? Here we find the darker side of cosmopolitanism. For without strong attachments and loyalties extending beyond family and friends, symbolic analysts may never develop the habits and attitudes of social responsibility. They will be world citizens, but without accepting or even acknowledging any of the obligations that citizenship in a polity normally implies.<sup>24</sup>

. . . a new breed of men and women for whom religion, culture, and ethnic nationality are marginal elements in a working identity . . . the word foreign has no meaning to the ambitious global businessperson. . . . How can the physical distinction between domestic and foreign have any resonance in a

virtual world defined by electronic communications and intrinsically unbounded markets?<sup>25</sup>

If such commentaries are accurate, large segments of the world's leadership may not be sufficiently involved in the processes of globalization to be sensitive to all the potential ways in which unstable situations can evolve. On the other hand, there is also a segment of elites that is aware of the negative consequences of a globalizing world and thus inclined to champion localizing dynamics. The latter may not be as numerous or powerful as the former, but as indicated by the protests in Seattle during the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in December 1999, their ranks are large enough to prevent a worldwide consensus on the virtues of globalization. Presumably, fragmenting dynamics are just as operative in elite circles as they are at every other level of aggregation.

### *The Maintenance and Coherence of Collectivities*

The prime task of those who analyze such matters as system coherence is one of trying to comprehend the factors that enable systems to get from one day, week, month, and year to the next. This task can be restated as one of understanding how and why so many of the stable situations in the world persist. Such a perspective inhibits analysts from focusing exclusively on instabilities and thus does not provide a baseline for assessing when situations might deteriorate. It facilitates grasping when and where instability is likely to set in by compelling analysts to be sensitive to factors that can undermine high-maintenance systems. It suggests that analysts should be just as attentive to the stable as to the unstable circumstances that sustain the course of events.

The previous enumeration of the sources of fragmentation indicates where analytical antennae should be focused in the vast complexity that constitutes the global scene. Clearly, the skill revolution, the organizational explosion, and the mobility upheaval have heightened the probabilities of micro-macro processes moving systems closer to the edge of collapse. That is, the enhanced skills of people and the proliferation of organizations through which they can channel their enlarged talents, along with the deterritorialization that has accompanied their wide movement around the world, are likely to generate and intensify ever greater numbers of authority crises. Whatever the nature of the dynamics that sustain ethnic sensitivities, religious fervor, and independence movements, or that otherwise lead to the spread of multicultural societies, and quite apart from the virtues of multicultural arrangements, it is reasonable to speculate that more and more communities will be wracked by divisiveness and efforts to decentralize authority. As many extant situations today demonstrate, the intensification of subgroupism and the relocation of authority tend to weaken states and their capacity to maintain high levels of systemic coherence.

Our analytical antennae also need to be attentive to those fragmenting dynamics that serve to reinforce and deepen the coherence of other situations. Against the factors that may eat away at the maintenance of collectivities are the adaptive ways in which authority is being transferred upward, downward, and sideward out of the state-centric world and relocated in new spheres of authority (SOAs) throughout the

multicentric world. In effect, the SOAs serve as mechanisms for constructively absorbing the dynamics of fragmentation. The dialectical process embedded in fragmentation may in the long run give rise to new forms of political authority—that the syntheses emanating from globalizing forces as theses and localizing forces as antitheses may well be new social contracts that govern the SOAs to which decentralizing and disaggregating processes are giving rise and within which localizing dynamics and the needs of individuals can be accommodated.<sup>26</sup> To enumerate just a few of the possible SOAs, they might consist of issue regimes, professional organizations, neighborhoods, credit-rating agencies, local networks of the like-minded, truth commissions, codes of conduct for business (for example, the Sullivan principles), social movements, provincial governments, diaspora, regional unions, loose confederations of NGOs, transnational advocacy groups, and so on across all the diverse collectivities that have become major sources of decisional authority in the ever more complex multicentric world.

There is another, well-documented way in which adaptive processes counter the undermining impact of globalization. The possibility of individuals and communities losing their identity in the face of homogenizing global dynamics can be readily exaggerated. Not only is there a variety of local resistances to the lures of global commodities and media but also, perhaps even more widespread, there are individuals and communities that absorb global norms, practices, and products by transforming them in such a way as to render them consistent with their own local cultures. Cricket in India, for example, is no longer British cricket; it is Indian cricket, a feature of Indian culture.<sup>27</sup> Strong and powerful as fragmentative tensions may be, so are the means that have been developed to work around and avoid these tensions. A compelling generalization of this conclusion is offered by an astute anthropologist:

The new global cultural system *promotes difference* instead of suppressing it, but difference of a particular kind. Its hegemony is not of content, but of form. Global structures organize diversity, rather than replicating uniformity. . . . In other words, we are not all becoming the same, but we are portraying, dramatising and communicating our differences to each other in ways that are more widely intelligible. The globalizing hegemony is to be found in *structures of common difference*, which celebrate particular kinds of diversity while submerging, deflating or suppressing others. The global system is a common code, but its purpose is not common identification; it is the expression of distinctions, boundaries and disjunctures. The 'local,' 'ethnic' and the 'national' cannot therefore be seen as opposed to or resisting global culture, but instead, insofar as they can be domesticated and categorised, they are essential *parts* of global culture.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, analysts seeking to differentiate situations that are likely to remain stable from those that have the potential of deteriorating and becoming increasingly unstable have no easy task. Some situations and countries are moving toward ever more acceptable levels of systemic coherence, while others are prone to decline into prolonged instability. The surface clues as to which direction a country or situation may be headed, such as the robustness of economies and the nature and support of the prevailing political leadership and the forces opposed to it, should be supplemented

with assessments of trickier variables, such as the orientations and commitments of ordinary folk, their receptivity to new forms and loci of authority, and their readiness to engage in the organizational life of their communities or countries.

## Lessons for U.S. National Security

Although the conceptual underpinnings of stability have been taken for granted by policymakers and academics alike, the same cannot be said of the concept of security. Keenly aware that the end of the Cold War meant that U.S. security was no longer centrally dependent on military preparedness and advanced weapons technologies, that rather the country was subject to challenges from a wide variety of new and unfamiliar sources, many observers returned to their conceptual drawing boards in the hope of clarifying what national security involves in a world free of a superpower rivalry. In so doing, it became clear that, as difficult and precarious as the circumstances of the Cold War were, they were at least founded on certainties as to who the enemy was and what the threats were. The age of fragmentation, however, is pervaded with such a vast array of uncertainties that analysts were impelled to broaden the concept of national security to allow for a world in which protecting territory was less salient and compelling than was advancing the well-being of individuals and their societies. One inquiry, for example, focused on “human security,” which was conceived to include physical, psychological, gender, social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental security, as well as military security.<sup>29</sup>

Even though progress in developing this broader conception has yet to result in a widely shared and clearly specified operational meaning of national security, its outlines are consistent with the formulation of stability developed here. More accurately, it seems clear that none of the various forms of national security can be achieved or maintained unless it is founded on a dynamic conception of stability that allows for change and avoids stasis. Even more precisely, the more a situation or system is marked by high and acceptable systemic coherence, the more can the values that attach to national security, however defined, be realized.

Locating U.S. national security concerns in the context of the foregoing elaboration of the concept of stability leads to several insights. First and foremost, perhaps, policymakers need to appreciate that micro-macro interactions are crucial to many of the situations around the world of concern to the United States and that their ability to exercise control over such situations is severely limited. In Kosovo, Serbia, East Timor, Russia, Colombia, and a host of other places, public moods, evolving identities, and long-standing aspirations are predominant variables that cannot be readily controlled by native politicians, much less by distant foreign offices. Indeed, the necessity of being sensitive to micro-macro phenomena throughout the world places a huge burden on the intelligence agencies of governments. Anticipating how and when people will act collectively—what stimuli will move them and under what conditions they will remain quiescent—is perhaps the most difficult task confronting those who analyze developments elsewhere in the world.

In addition, as evidenced by hackers who break into Internet sites and files with a fair amount of ease, the pace at which micro actions get converted into macro actions

is accelerating, and the range of individuals who can have macro consequences is broadening. In effect, the skill revolution has become a threat as well as an asset insofar as the security of communities at every level of aggregation is concerned. The very technological training that societies need to provide their citizens and military personnel can also be used against them by those in their ranks who become alienated and employ their skills to roam around cyberspace, creating havoc for their societies.

Second, the predominance of micro-macro processes suggests that heads of state, prime ministers, and cabinets often hold office under precarious circumstances and that therefore commitments to them ought not be unqualified. To attempt to shore up a favored prime minister through foreign policy statements and gestures is to run the danger of ending up on the wrong side, in the event abrupt changes move a situation toward the edge of collapse.

Third, and no less important, policymakers need to avoid excessive confidence that favorable situations abroad marked by infinitesimal or no change are likely to continue to be benign. They need to frequently remind themselves that the acceleration of micro-macro dynamics renders all situations susceptible to sudden and rapid deterioration. More than that, as the skill revolution gathers momentum, and more and more people begin to sense the contribution they can make to collective actions, the greater is the likelihood that internal conflicts will be increasingly shrill, intense, and confrontational.

Fourth, it seems clear that stability and instability come in various forms. Stable foundations may lie at the root of situations that convey a surface appearance of crisis, and unstable conditions may underlie situations seemingly free of crisis. The possibility of being misled in these regards highlights the need of policymakers to be clear in their own minds as to the criteria of systemic coherence they employ when they assess the long-term prospects of countries and the short-term likelihood that situations of concern will spin further out of control. No less important, they need to be keenly sensitive to the ways in which degrees of stability and instability vary from country to country and region to region. Clearly, for example, just as China's stability is different from Israel's, so are the dynamics of change in Europe different from those in Asia—truisms, to be sure, but easily overlooked if policymakers try to impose a singular conception of stability on the diverse situations comprising the global agenda.

Fifth, strategic discourse needs to recognize that a powerful form of the mobility upheaval—millions upon millions of refugees—can be a central feature of the new wars that mark the frangible epoch. Not to anticipate that a major consequence of military campaigns today may be an unmanageable flow of displaced persons whose plight needs immediate and energetic attention is to risk losing control over the reasons for which such actions were undertaken. Not only might control be lost on the ground where the combat ensued, but losses might also be incurred in the struggle to stay on a high moral ground where human rights norms are valued. The organizational explosion and the bifurcation of global structures make it difficult to wage military campaigns in which the world remains oblivious to their unintended consequences.

Sixth, the deepening and broadening of frangible dynamics has led to such great complexity within and among communities that the aforementioned applicability of the concept of security to so many aspects of community life poses the risk of

confounding the variability of its meanings. If the security of all institutions, groups, and practices is endangered, as indeed can be the case under fragmenting conditions, then discourse needs to be specific about what kinds of threats to what kinds of situations reference is made. Moreover, if the scope of security is now all-encompassing, there is a danger that the ambiguities thus involved will be avoided by recourse to excessively narrow conceptions of where the main threats to security may be located. There can be little doubt, for example, that new technologies have intensified terrorism as a threat to the security dilemmas of societies, but it would be a grave mistake to become so preoccupied with such threats as to overlook, or even to define away, the numerous threats that are less to physical well-being and more to economic, political, or social institutions.

Seventh, perhaps the key to coping with a fast-changing, complex world in which nonlinearity prevails is adaptability, that is, being able to adjust to the unexpected in creative and appropriate ways, rather than being surprised and perforce falling back on established strategy that failed to anticipate the unexpected. One organization has managed to build such a perspective into its operating procedures: the Marine Corps. Because they must confront new and unexpected challenges, Marine platoons have become adept at adjusting to the unforeseen,<sup>30</sup> and there is no reason why their success in this regard cannot be emulated across an entire policymaking organization. To do so is to be ready to ignore, work around, modify, or otherwise bypass established bureaucratic procedures and the inertia they sustain. It is hoped that the nature of fragmenting challenges will encourage, even compel, the U.S. policymaking organizations to overcome inertia and become more adaptable.

Eighth, if adaptability is the key to effective security policies in the future, then it is crucial that policymaking organizations beware of excessive single-mindedness toward any perceived threat. To think out of the box is not to move to a small enclosure with room for only one new idea. To be sure, a vast and creative literature on the potentials of information warfare, the nature of new weaponry, and other new forms of military operations is now available, and it is pervaded with valuable insights and recommendations.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, all too often a new problem tends to get exaggerated into *the* problem and is then placed so high on the list of priorities that all other problems get downgraded and, in effect, slighted or ignored. The fear of new kinds of terrorism and germ warfare sometimes exhibits this characteristic, especially after these problems were elevated to the fastest growing category of military defense spending in the United States. As one observer puts it, the perception of such threats “has begun to outpace the facts. . . . [The government should be] acting and spending smart and not spending and talking big.”<sup>32</sup> Even more specifically, anthrax came to be viewed by the Department of Defense as a vehicle for germ warfare that constituted such a huge threat as to necessitate an order that all members of the Armed Forces have an anthrax vaccination, a policy that not only became a central preoccupation at the highest levels of government but also proved to be ill-founded because the vaccine was subsequently judged to be of questionable value. As one analyst puts it, “Obsessing over operational and tactical details—like anthrax—as a pretext for permitting leaders to dodge fundamental strategic issues has become unacceptable.”<sup>33</sup>

Ninth, there may be lessons to be learned from the world's recent experience with the perceived dangers of Y2K. The community of experts on the subject has gone through, and is still going through, much soul-searching on why their dire expectations fell so far short of reality. It appears that the lessons can be clustered under three headings: strategic, informational, and managerial. Since the transition from December 31, 1999, to January 1, 2000, was a successful (and extremely rare) case of worldwide cooperation rooted in and sustained by micro-macro interactions, its lessons may have relevance for the framing of approaches to coping with challenges to security in a fragnegrative world. Given the prevalence of conflict among people and countries, that is, there may be something to be learned from those moments when the tensions yielded to cooperation. Six *strategic* lessons stand out: (1) a common menace and cross-border interdependencies were keys to success; (2) networking and information work; (3) leapfrogging (that is, learning from those who started early) is good; (4) infrastructures are both connected and resilient; (5) public-private partnerships can work; and (6) technology can be managed. Likewise, six *informational* lessons seem salient: (1) facts build confidence; (2) self-reporting should be valued; (3) those close to a situation understand it best (for example, the United States had doubts about Russian natural gas going to Europe, but the Finns, who depend on Russian natural gas, had studied the pipelines in Russia and were very confident); (4) details count; (5) the information lag should not be overlooked (reporting on repairs completed lagged behind making the repairs); and (6) information cartels have marginal value (that is, organizations that charged for information did not have better information than what was publicly available). In addition, five *managerial* lessons loom large: (1) explain the program in "plain English"; (2) realize that information and communications technology are mission-critical; (3) know the systems, suppliers, and business processes; (4) manage risks proactively; and (5) prioritize requirements for results.<sup>34</sup> Taken together, these 17 lessons highlight the large extent to which the maintenance of stability involves innovative, thorough, and perhaps even aggressive approaches to a challenging world.

Finally, and by way of summary, these observations highlight the central themes of the preceding discussion:

We must develop an ideology of perpetual renewal. The reality of globality—the time compression and the pressures of complexity or, in other words, the death of distance, the death of sequentiality and the death of traditional structures—require from each society, from each organization, and each individual an integrated and internalized capacity for renewal. . . . Particularly, a society can only flourish if it is based on change and stability. A fast-changing society requires societal glue provided by the preservation of cultural traditions and shared values.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

With the advent of a bifurcation of global structures and a vigorous multicentric world of diverse collectivities that is adding substantially to the density of actors on

the global stage, it might seem as if the world is headed for increasing unrest and instability. The ever-widening interdependence of publics, economies, societies, and politics generated by a microelectronic revolution that has collapsed time and space would also seem to have rendered instabilities in one part of the world vulnerable to spreading quickly to other parts. Terrorists emulate each other; currency collapses cascade quickly across national boundaries; secessionist movements are contagious; environmental, human rights, and labor groups join protests against the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and the WTO—developments that cumulatively suggest ever-widening pockets of instability on a global scale.

Yet, for all the world's problems and the insecurities they generate, it is possible to conclude on an upbeat note. While policymakers need to monitor the innumerable present and potential situations at work in the world for signs of further breakdown, they can also take comfort in the sheer numbers of organizations active on the global stage. These organizations can serve as a bulwark against instability or at least against a continual and worldwide spread of deteriorating conditions. The processes are hardly democratic, but the evolving bifurcation at the global level is making it increasingly difficult for a few collectivities or situations to dominate the others. Localization is no less a powerful force than globalization, and the tendencies toward decentralization undergirding localism may offer as many saving graces as there are in the centralization that accompanies globalism. 🌐

## Notes

The author is grateful to Ellen L. Frost, Richard L. Kugler, and Hongying Wang for their reactions to earlier drafts of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in the case of the current regime in Vietnam, caught between a communist system and capitalist world, the overall policy orientation appears to be one of “frenetic stasis.” Seth Mydans, “Vietnam Hesitates on Globalization,” *International Herald Tribune*, April 14, 2000, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Other terms suggestive of the contradictory tensions that pull systems toward both coherence and collapse are *chaord*, a label that juxtaposes the dynamics of chaos and order; *glocalization*, which points to the simultaneity of globalizing and localizing dynamics; and *regcal*, a term designed to focus attention on the links between regional and local phenomena. The chaord designation is proposed in Dee Hock, *Birth of the Chaordic Age* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1999); the glocalization concept is elaborately developed in Roland Robertson, “Globalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, eds. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 25–44; and the regcal formulation can be found in Susan H.C. Tai and Y.H. Wong, “Advertising Decisionmaking in Asia: ‘Glocal’ versus ‘Regcal’ Approach,” *Journal of Managerial Issues* 10 (Fall 1998), 318–339. Here the term *fragmegration* is preferred because it does not imply a territorial scale and broadens the focus to include tensions at work in organizations as well as those that pervade communities.

<sup>3</sup> This concept was first developed in James N. Rosenau, “‘Fragmegrative’ Challenges to National Security,” in *Understanding U.S. Strategy: A Reader*, ed. Terry L. Heyns (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1983), 65–82. For subsequent and more elaborate formulations, see James N. Rosenau, “New Dimensions of Security: The Interaction of Globalizing and Localizing Dynamics,” *Security Dialogue* 25 (September 1994), 255–282.

<sup>4</sup> For an extended inquiry into the dynamics that have obscured the boundaries between national and international affairs, see James N. Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Roland Robertson, "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept," in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity*, ed. Mike Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 19.

<sup>6</sup> Harry C. Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), xiv.

<sup>7</sup> The author is indebted to Richard L. Kugler for calling my attention to these distinctions.

<sup>8</sup> For an elaboration of a formulation that treats disorder as a form of order, see James N. Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> Some 5 months after the coup, it was reported that the Pakistani public began to find it unacceptable. See Celia W. Dugger, "In Pakistan, Disillusionment with New Rulers Is Widespread," *International Herald Tribune*, March 7, 2000, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Yankelevich, "How American Individualism Is Evolving," *The Public Perspective* 9, no. 2 (February/March 1998), 4.

<sup>11</sup> For a full discussion of the skill revolution, see Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*; James N. Rosenau and W. Michael Fagen, "Increasingly Skillful Citizens: A New Dynamism in World Politics?" *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (December 1997), 655–686; and Ulric Neisser, *The Rising Curve: Long-Term Gains in IQ and Related Measures* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1998).

<sup>12</sup> For an effort to explain the pervasiveness of authority crises, see Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*, 186–191.

<sup>13</sup> The bifurcation of global structures is elaborated at length in Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*, chapter 10.

<sup>14</sup> Lester M. Salamon, "The Global Associational Revolution: The Rise of the Third Sector on the World Scene," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 1994), 109–122. For a cogent assessment of the proliferation and significance of networks, see John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "A New Epoch—and Spectrum—of Conflict," in *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, eds. J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997), 5.

<sup>15</sup> The consequences of the mobility upheaval are creatively explored in Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Rosenau, *Beyond Globalization*, chapter 8.

<sup>17</sup> Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier*, chapters 7, 11, and 18. The various "scapes" are discussed in Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 33–37.

<sup>18</sup> For a cogent, data-based analysis of the dynamics involved in the emergence of a global economy, see Geoffrey Garrett, "The Causes of Globalization," a paper presented at the Conference on Development and the Nation-State in the Crosscurrents of Globalization and Decentralization, Washington University, St. Louis, April 8, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> For a more extensive collection of such commentaries, see James N. Rosenau, "Emergent Spaces, New Places, and Old Faces: Proliferating Identities in a Globalizing World," a paper presented at the Conference on Globalization and Cultural Security: Migration and Negotiations of Identity, sponsored by the House of World Cultures Berlin and the Toda Institute, Berlin, October 14–17, 1999, 17–21.

<sup>20</sup> Stephanie Burnham, personal communication, May 23, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> With extremely limited resources (less than \$5,000), my office recently sent a mail questionnaire to a sample of some 3,000 leaders listed in *Who's Who in America*—hardly an adequate solution to the problem, but at least a beginning in the sense that the survey sought to identify persons on the cutting

edge of globalization by including a number of items designed to uncover the global responsibilities, orientations, and affiliations of the respondents. As of January 10, 2000, approximately 850 questionnaires had been returned.

<sup>22</sup> Peter L. Berger, "Four Faces of Global Culture," *The National Interest* 49 (Fall 1997), 24.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 6, 45, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 309.

<sup>25</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 17, 29.

<sup>26</sup> James N. Rosenau, "In Search of Institutional Contexts," a paper presented at the Conference on International Institutions: Global Processes-Domestic Consequences, Duke University, April 9–11, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, chapter 5.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Wilk, "Learning to Be Local in Belize: Global Systems of Common Difference," in *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*, ed. Daniel Miller (London: Routledge, 1996), 118.

<sup>29</sup> Laura Reed, "Rethinking Security from the Ground Up," *Breakthroughs* IX (Spring 2000), 21–27.

<sup>30</sup> This adeptness has been supplemented by the development of the platoon as what was earlier described as an "all channel network, in which every node can communicate with every other node." See Joel Garreau, "Point Men for a Revolution: Can the Marines Survive a Shift from Hierarchies to Networks?" *The Washington Post* (March 6, 1999), 1.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Arquilla and Ronfeldt, "A New Epoch—and Spectrum—of Conflict," and Martin C. Libicki, *What Is Information Warfare?* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Paul Richter, "Doubt on 'New Terrorism,'" *International Herald Tribune* (February 9, 2000), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Andrew J. Bacevich, "Anthrax Vaccination and the Deeper Problems of Leadership," distributed by email by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, March 11, 2000, 4.

<sup>34</sup> International Y2K Coordination Center, *Y2K: Starting the Century Right*, <<http://www.iy2kcc.org/February2000Report.htm>>. The listing is from the executive summary at <<http://www.iy2kcc.org/ExecutiveSummary.htm>>.

<sup>35</sup> Klaus Schwab, *Opening Remarks* (Davos, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, February 2000).