



# The Imperial Tense: Prospects and Problems of American Empire

*Andrew J. Bacevich*

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Does the United States today preside over a global empire? America's emergence as the world's dominant power in the 1990s nurtured the perception—initially more pronounced abroad than at home—that with the passing of the cold war the United States had indeed become an imperial republic. Some observers, convinced that American power is necessarily benign, welcome that new reality. Others are not so sure. In *The Imperial Tense*, Andrew Bacevich has drawn together a stimulating collection of arguments on a subject of compelling current importance. Since September 11 and the ensuing “war on terror,” President Bush's sweeping rhetoric and national security strategy has affirmed the imperial nature of American foreign policy, provoking concerns over where those ambitions may lead. What is the nature and scope of the American empire? What are its prospects and challenges? Is American power adequate for the task of managing a global imperium? And what of will? Are the American people prepared to pay the price that the preservation of that empire may demand? *The Imperial Tense* offers cogent reflections on these and related questions by leading scholars and commentators, including Mr. Bacevich (who has also written the Introduction), James Chace, Stanley Hoffmann, Charles Krauthammer, Charles Maier, David Rieff, Deepak Lal, John Milbank, Jonathan Freedland, Peter Bender, Martin Walker, Perry Anderson, Jedediah Purdy, G. John Ikenberry, Stephen Books, William Wohlforth, David Marquand, David North, Gabriel Ash, Ivan Eland, and Victor Davis Hanson.

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