

nam. It does not include minor conflicts like the Spanish-American War or Desert Storm. During the twentieth century, the United States was at war 15 percent of the time. In the second half of the twentieth century, it was at war 22 percent of the time. And since the beginning of the twenty-first century, in 2001, the United States has been constantly at war. War is central to the American experience, and its frequency is constantly increasing. It is built into American culture and deeply rooted in American geopolitics. Its purpose must be clearly understood.

America was born out of war and has continued to fight to this day at an ever increasing pace. Norway's grand strategy might be more about economics than warfare, but U.S. strategic goals, and U.S. grand strategy, originate in fear. The same is true of many nations. Rome did not set out to conquer the world. It set out to defend itself, and in the course of that effort it became an empire. The United States would have been quite content at first not to have been attacked and defeated by the British, as it was in the War of 1812. Each fear, however, once alleviated, creates new vulnerabilities and new fears. Nations are driven by fear of losing what they have. Consider the following in terms of this fear.

The United States has five geopolitical goals that drive its grand strategy. Note that these goals increase in magnitude, ambition, and difficulty as you go down the list.

### I: THE COMPLETE DOMINATION OF NORTH AMERICA BY THE UNITED STATES ARMY

Had the United States remained a nation of discrete states existing between the Atlantic coast and the Allegheny mountains, it is extremely unlikely that it would have survived. It not only had to unite but had to spread into the vast territory between the Alleghenies and the Rocky Mountains. This gave the United States not only strategic depth but also some of the richest agricultural land in the world. Even more important, it was land with a superb system of navigable rivers that allowed the country's agricultural surplus to be shipped to world markets, creating a class of businessmen-farmers that is unique in history.

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 gave the United States title to this land. But it was the Battle of New Orleans in 1814, in which Andrew Jackson defeated the British, that gave the nation real control of the region, since New Orleans was the single choke point of the entire river system. If Yorktown founded the nation, the Battle of New Orleans founded its economy. And what secured this in turn was the Battle of San Jacinto, a few hundred miles west of New Orleans, where the Mexican army was defeated by Texans and thus could never pose a threat to the Mississippi River basin again. The defeat of the Mexican army was not inevitable. Mexico was in many ways a more developed and powerful country than the United States. Its defeat made the U.S. Army the dominant power in North America and secured the continent for the United States—a vast and rich country that no one could challenge.

