

## THE 2060s

## A GOLDEN DECADE

The outcome of the war will unequivocally affirm the position of the United States as the world's leading international power and of North America as the center of gravity in the international system. It will allow the United States to consolidate its command of space, and with that, its control of international sea lanes. It also will begin to create a pattern of relationships the country will depend on in the coming decades.

The most important outcome of the war will be a treaty that formally will cede to the United States exclusive rights to militarize space. Other powers will be able to use space for nonmilitary purposes subject to U.S. inspection. This will be, simply, the treaty recognition of a military reality. The United States will have defeated Japan and Turkey in space, and it will not let that power slip away. The treaty will also limit the number and type of hypersonic aircraft that Turkey and Japan can have, though it will be well understood that this will be unenforceable—merely a gratuitous humiliation victims enjoy imposing on the vanquished. The treaty will serve American interests and remain in force only so long as American power can enforce it. Poland will have been the great victor, expanding its reach enormously,

although its losses will have been the most substantial of any major participant. The Chinese and Koreans will feel well rid of the Japanese, who will have lost an empire but will retain their country, having suffered only a few thousand casualties. Japan will still be facing its population problems, but that will be the price of defeat. Turkey will remain the leader of the Islamic world, governing an empire made restive by defeat.

But Poland will feel embittered in spite of its victory. Its territory will have been directly invaded by Germany and Turkey; its allies occupied. Its casualties will be in the tens of thousands, the result of civilian battle casualties from ground combat—house-to-house fighting in which armored infantrymen are safer than civilians. Poland's infrastructure will have been shattered and, along with it, the nation's economy. Though Poland will be able to tilt the region's economic table in its favor, exploiting its conquests to quickly rebuild its economy, the victory will still be a painful one.

To the west, Poland's traditional enemy, Germany, will be weakened, subordinate, and sullen, while the Turks, beaten for the moment, will retain their influence a few hundred miles south in the Balkans and in southern Russia. The Poles will have taken the port of Rijeka and maintain bases in western Greece to prevent Turkish aggression at the entrance to the Adriatic. But the Turks will be still there, and Europeans have long memories. Perhaps most stinging, Poland will be included among nations banned from the military use of space. The United States will make no exception to that. In fact, the United States will be most uneasy about Poland after the war. Poland will have regained the empire it had in the seventeenth century, and added to it.

Poland will create a confederated system of governance for its former allies and will directly rule Belarus. It will be economically weak and badly hurt by the war, but it will have the territory and time to recover.

The defeat of France and Germany by Poland will decisively shift power in Europe to the east. In a sense, the eclipse of Atlantic Europe that began in 1945 will complete itself in the 2050s. The United States won't relish the long-term implications of a vigorous, self-confident Poland dominant in Europe. It therefore will encourage its closest ally, Britain, which will have thrown its weight decisively into the war, to increase its own economic ar