

Stars, so it won't have the warning the United States will have before missiles start hitting its bases. In fact, hypersonic aircraft will be dropping precision-guided munitions on bloc facilities with literally no warning at all. One moment they will be there, and suddenly the bloc's strike capability will be gone.

By 7 p.m., the U.S. space and hypersonic force will be devastated. The United States will have lost command of space and have only a few hundred aircraft left. Its allies in Europe will have had their forces overwhelmed. U.S. warships around the world will have been attacked and sunk. The Indians will have lost their assets as well. The American coalition will be militarily devastated.

#### COUNTERSTRIKE

At the same time, American society will be intact, as will be that of many U.S. allies. This is the underlying weakness of the Coalition strategy: The United States is a nuclear power—as, for that matter, will be Japan, Turkey, Poland, and India. Attacks on military targets will not trigger a nuclear response. However, if the Coalition would try to force capitulation by beginning to go beyond military targets and move to trying to attack the American population itself, the threshold at which the Americans, or their allies, might go nuclear could be reached. Since the Coalition will be looking not for mutual annihilation but for a political settlement that the Americans in particular could live with, and since the Americans are often profoundly unpredictable, using their hypersonic forces to start inflicting damage and casualties on American civilians would be incredibly dangerous. The possession of nuclear weapons will shape war to this extent. It circumscribes the degree of the conflict.

Nevertheless, the United States will be militarily damaged and won't know how far the Coalition will go. The Coalition's hope will be that when the degree of damage is recognized by the United States, together with the unpredictability of the Coalition, it will opt for a political settlement that would include accepting Turkish and Japanese spheres of influence, defining limits to America's sphere of influence, and introducing a workable, verifi-

able framework for limiting conflict in space. In other words, the Coalition will wager that the United States will realize that it is now one great power among several instead of the only superpower, and accept a generous and secure sphere of influence of its own. And it will hope that the suddenness and effectiveness of the assault in space will cause the United States to overestimate the Coalition's military power.

The United States will in fact overestimate the Coalition's military power, but that will generate the opposite response from what the Coalition hopes. The Americans won't see themselves as engaged in a limited war in which the enemy has limited and definable political goals that the United States can live with. Rather, the Americans will believe that the Coalition's forces are vastly greater than they really are, and that the United States faces the possibility, if not of annihilation, then of a massive reduction of power and heightened vulnerability to further attacks by the Coalition and other powers. The United States will see this as an existential threat.

The United States will react viscerally and emotionally to the attack. If it accepts the political settlement that has been transmitted to it on the evening of November 24, the country's long-term future becomes uncertain. Turkey and Japan—countries unlikely to fight each other—would be between them dominate Eurasia. There would be two hegemons, not one, but if they were to cooperate, Eurasia would be united and exploited systematically. The ultimate nightmare of American grand strategy would be real, and over time the Coalition members—not easily manipulable into war with each other—would usurp command of space and the sea. Agreeing to the Coalition's offer would end the immediate war but would also initiate a long American decline. But this will not be carefully thought out that night. Just as it did after the sinking of the *Maine*, the attack on Pearl Harbor and the shock of 9/11, the United States will go into a rage. It will reject the terms and go to war.

The United States won't make a move while Coalition reconnaissance spacecraft are in place. The Coalition won't have anything to equal the complex American Battle Star system that has been destroyed, but it will have an array of last-generation satellites that provide real-time intelligence on the United States. While they are operational, the Coalition will be able to see and counter any moves made by the Americans. The American recon-