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**John C. Hulsman & A. Wess Mitchell: The Godfather Doctrine**

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*“The Don, rest in peace, was slippin’.*

*Ten years ago could I have gotten to him?”*

—Virgil “the Turk” Sollozzo

## *Introduction* ≡

The age of American global dominance is drawing to a rapid and definitive close. In the space of barely a decade, the United States has slipped from a position of seemingly inexhaustible national strength to one of breathtaking vulnerability. Crowning its victory in the Cold War, the American Republic sat atop an economic, diplomatic

and military power base rivaling that of the Roman Empire. American businesses set the pace of global commerce; American diplomats piloted international institutions whose rules we ourselves had written; and American armies were underwriters of peace in the world's remotest regions. America's was a power so irresistible, and an influence so pervasive, that no country, large or small, could reasonably hope to succeed in an international undertaking without Washington's blessing.

That world is gone. America in 2009 is economically palsied, diplomatically isolated, and militarily exhausted. Rather than a triumphant stroll along the flagstone-paved pathway to a new American Century, the country's current course looks more and more like a grim and unforgiving trudge

down the steep and rocky slope of decline. Upon assuming office, the forty-fourth president will inherit two simultaneous land wars, a rapidly arming Iran, a brooding and reanimated international jihad, a tottering atomic Pakistan, a \$500 billion budget deficit, a devastating mortgage and investment banking crisis, a \$700 billion bailout of the financial sector, and the weakest dollar in modern American history. He will also be the first U.S. president since the end of the Cold War to face a world in which America must share its seat in the global cockpit with other Great Powers. A resurgent and energy-rich Russia, a geopolitically awakened India, and a booming and proud China—all see themselves as rising powers gaining traction at the expense of the United States. They will expect to have a say in how the world is run.































