

appears and can attain enough economic success and popular appeal to challenge it for the world's allegiance.

There is bound to be some backsliding into authoritarianism by some of the world's new democracies, Plattner notes. But as great a misfortune as that would be for the people involved, he argues, it would not necessarily mean the end of democracy's global prestige. Even if a majority of the new democracies failed, the presumption would still be that liberal democracy is the only form of government suitable for mature nations.

"Democracy's preeminence can be seriously challenged," Plattner maintains, "only by an ideology with universalist aspirations that proves capable of coming to power in an economically advanced or militarily powerful nation."

Nationalism does not qualify as such an ideology, because it is not universalist. Islamic fundamentalism, although "probably the most vital alternative to democracy to be found anywhere today," is unlikely to present a serious global challenge. Conversions outside the Islamic world have been few, and Islamic fundamentalism appears unable to serve as the basis for economically or militarily successful regimes. Revolutionary Iran no longer seems "even the Islamic wave of the future."

The most likely "seedbeds for the birth of a new antidemocratic ideology," Plattner believes, are the Soviet Union and China. Their size and power, as well as

their influence over Eastern Europe and East Asia, respectively, make what happens in those nations crucially important for democracy's future. "The emergence of a military-backed neoauthoritarian regime, possibly after a period of chaos or even civil war, may be as likely an outcome as a stable democracy in both [countries] And if such a regime were economically or militarily successful, it could quickly become an attractive model for other countries in its region and in the world."

Developments in Japan and the other noncommunist countries of East Asia also bear watching, Plattner says. Despite the apparent stability of democracy in Japan, the future might lead not to a greater convergence with Western-style liberal democracy but to "an increased emphasis on those features that distinguish East Asian societies from the West." A new ideology could gradually evolve, which, he speculates, given the "extraordinary economic and technological dynamism of the region, could become extremely attractive to other nations."

One other nation holds a key to democracy's future, Plattner adds: the United States. "[T]here are many reasons to worry about the political, economic, and cultural health of American democracy," he notes. "A serious social or economic crisis in the United States . . . would have a devastating effect on the fortunes of democracy worldwide."

Day of Infamy

"The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor" by David Kahn, in *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1991-92), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, shocked Americans out of the illusion that they were safely isolated from the rest of the world and prompted U.S. entry into World War II. Some historians have maintained that U.S. intelligence analysts possessed advance information about the attack but failed to understand it. Writers of a more conspiratorial bent have contended that President Franklin D. Roosevelt (or, in a different version, Brit-

ish Prime Minister Winston Churchill) learned from his intelligence services that the attack was coming but kept quiet in order to get the United States into the war. For once, however, says Kahn, author of *The Codebreakers* (1967), things are almost as simple as they appear.

In one of the more serious studies of the question, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (1962), Roberta Wohlstetter claimed that U.S. intelligence analysts failed to

anticipate the attack “not for want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones.” The “noise” of extraneous information, in other words, drowned out the “signal” of useful clues. In reality, Kahn states, there *was* a dearth of intelligence materials. “Not one [diplomatic or naval] intercept, not one datum of intelligence ever said a thing about an attack on Pearl Harbor.”

Some critics, including Admiral Husband Kimmel, the naval commander at Pearl, have found it hard to reconcile the complete surprise of the attack with the fact that U.S. cryptanalysts in September 1940 had scored a great triumph: They cracked the Empire of Japan’s most secret diplomatic cipher. The Americans dubbed it PURPLE. In the succeeding months, the intercepted Japanese diplomatic messages corroborated other evidence that a crisis was approaching. On July 31, 1941, for example, the foreign minister in Tokyo told Japan’s ambassador in Washington that “There is more reason than ever before for us to arm ourselves to the teeth for all-out war.” But, Kahn points out, “the Japanese

diplomatic PURPLE and other intercepts did not reveal military or naval plans. The [U.S.] Army had not solved any Japanese army codes because it could not intercept enough messages. The Navy had made scant progress on the main Japanese operations code”

After Pearl Harbor, Kahn notes, U.S. codebreaking played a vital role in the Allied war effort. The cracking of Japanese naval codes made possible “three critical American victories: the battle of Midway, the midair assassination of Japan’s leading strategist and architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, and the strangling of the island empire through the sinking of its merchant marine.” British-American exploitation of the German Enigma cipher machine helped defeat Germany’s U-boats and land forces. And the breaking of PURPLE “later yielded astonishing insights into Hitler’s plans, gleaned from the messages of the Japanese ambassador in Berlin.” All that hastened the war’s end, but the Allies had no knowledge that could have averted the tragedy at Pearl Harbor.

Why Nukes Will Not Spread

“Winning the Nonproliferation Battle” by Thomas W. Graham, in *Arms Control Today* (Sept. 1991), 11 Dupont Cir., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons now seems more urgent than ever. In recent months, the United States has been trying to prevent North Korea from joining the nuclear club, and it has pressured China and India not to sell reactors to Iran. Despite such challenges, Graham, a former official at the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency who is now with the University of California’s Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation in San Diego, is confident that the spread of nuclear weapons can be halted.

Nuclear proliferation, Graham maintains, is a much less intractable problem than many strategists think. Past efforts to curb it, he points out, “have been extremely successful, especially given the meager resources . . . devoted to the task.” Today, outside the five declared nuclear

powers, only a relatively small number of “problem countries” have or are close to having nuclear weapons. India, Israel, Pakistan, and South Africa, despite formal denials, have either nuclear weapons or the ability to build them within days or weeks. They are *de facto* nuclear powers. Four other nations—Argentina, Brazil, South Korea, and Taiwan—have the technical capability to build nuclear weapons within just a few years, although none now appears likely to do so. And five nations—Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea—seem to desire nuclear weapons, although getting them will not be easy.

There is no evidence that this list of “problem countries” is growing, Graham says. In fact, many nations that once were considering nuclear efforts—among them, Egypt, Indonesia, Spain, Sweden, and Tur-