The Project for the New American Century was established in the spring of 1997. From its inception, the Project has been concerned



with the decline in the strength of America’s defenses, and in the problems this would create for the exercise of American leadership around the globe and, ultimately, for the preservation of peace. Our concerns were reinforced by the two congressionally-mandated defense studies that appeared soon thereafter: the Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defense Review (May 1997) and the report of the National Defense Panel (December 1997). Both studies assumed that U.S. defense budgets would remain flat or continue to shrink. As a result, the defense plans and recommendations outlined in the two reports were fashioned with such budget constraints in mind. Broadly speaking, the QDR stressed current military requirements at the expense of future defense needs, while the NDP’s report emphasized future needs by underestimating today’s defense responsibilities. Although the QDR and the report of the NDP proposed different policies, they shared one underlying feature: the gap between resources and strategy should be resolved not by increasing resources but by shortchanging strategy. America’s armed forces, it seemed, could either prepare for the future by retreating from its role as the essential defender of today’s global security order, or it could take care of current business but be unprepared for tomorrow’s threats and tomorrow’s battlefields.