The end of the Cold War left the United States in a remarkable position: it was far and away the world's most powerful country and it was on good terms with most of the world's major powers. Despite these advantages, its foreign policy record since then is mostly one of disappointments and sometimes costly failures. These recurring follies are due in part to America's structural position in the international system, but they also reveal some recurring weaknesses in America's foreign policy establishment and its overall approach to foreign affairs.

Stephen M. Walt is the Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where he served as Academic Dean from 2002 to 2006. He previously taught at Princeton and at the University of Chicago, where he was Master of the Social Sciences Collegiate Division and Deputy Dean of Social Sciences. He is a contributing editor at Foreign Policy magazine, co-chair of the editorial board of International Security, and co-editor of the Cornell Studies in Security Affairs book series. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in May 2005 and will receive the International Studies Association’s Distinguished Senior Scholar Award for International Security Studies in February 2015.

Professor Walt’s books include The Origins of Alliances, which received the 1988 Edgar S. Furniss National Security Book Award, and Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy, which was a finalist for the Lionel Gelber International Affairs Book Award and the Arthur Ross Book Prize. His most recent book, The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy (co-authored with John J. Mearsheimer) was a New York Times best-seller and has been translated into more than twenty foreign languages. His weekly Foreign Policy column can be found at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/voices/walt

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