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America's Path
Grand Strategy for the Next Administration

Edited by Richard Fontaine and Kristin M. Lord
Contributors: Robert J. Art, Richard K. Betts, Peter Feaver, Richard Fontaine, Kristin M. Lord and Anne-Marie Slaughter

Center for a New American Security
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Cover Image
Illustration by Liz Fontaine, Center for a New American Security.

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INTRODUCTION:
DEBATING AMERICA'S FUTURE

By Richard Fontaine and Kristin M. Lord

America's Path

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Introduction

America confronts a world in transition. The Middle East is quaking from a cascade of revolutions. Iran is inching ever closer to a nuclear bomb. China's power is rising, prompting countries across the region to both engage with it and hedge against it. Al Qaeda's power has shattered, yet its fragments remain dangerous. Sustained economic growth is transforming countries across Africa and Latin America, while Brazil, Turkey and India grow in global influence. Europe appears to be turning inward, as financial crises create economic constraints and political turmoil. Rapid advances in technology are empowering individuals and groups, while states are using technology to enhance their own power.

Whatever the outcome of the November 2012 presidential election, America's next president must confront all these changes and many more. He will have the opportunity to set America on a path toward replenished power, enhanced prosperity and renewed vitality. He will have the opportunity to shape the international order in ways that will benefit both America and the world. Yet he will do so in the context of constrained resources and deeply fragmented domestic politics.

To lead America wisely, the president and his administration must answer several questions: What kind of world does America face and how is the strategic landscape evolving? What are America's core national interests? How should America pursue its interests and what threatens them? What opportunities exist and how can America seize them? How should America convey its purpose, both at home and globally?

In June 2008, the Center for a New American Security published a compendium of essays to grapple with these very questions.[1] Edited by Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley, the volume compiled the views of leading strategists

from across the political spectrum and from both academia and the policy community. These essays helped to shape the national debate about grand strategy and served as a resource after the presidential election.

In this volume, we embark on a similar venture. We present the views of four leading strategists – Robert J. Art, Richard K. Betts, Peter Feaver and Anne-Marie Slaughter – who have diverse backgrounds and divergent perspectives. Despite their differences, they share a common mission: Promote informed debate about America's proper role in the world and the best ways to fulfill that role. In engaging this debate, the four writers wrestle with the broadest of foreign policy questions: What should constitute America's grand strategy in the next administration and in the years and decades thereafter?

Why Grand Strategy?

Grand strategy matches national means to national ends.[2] It assesses the international and domestic environments, defines U.S. interests in these environments and recommends ways and means to secure those interests. It explains America's role in the world and how to think about that role. It also provides a vision for how America should build and marshal all the relevant elements of national power and leverage assets in one area to achieve goals in another.[3]

The very mention of grand strategy can evoke eye-rolling. Grand can be mistaken for grandiose, and discussions of grand strategy are all too often divorced from the actual execution of national policy. Among busy policymakers, grand strategy may be dismissed as intellectual calisthenics for pundits with too few real responsibilities and too much time on their hands.

Yet this view undervalues grand strategy and the opportunities it affords. A well-crafted grand strategy serves several purposes, including:[4]

- Helping policymakers view policies holistically and understand how issues and relationships are entwined;
- Aiding decisionmakers in setting priorities and allocating scarce resources;
- Assisting bureaucracies in coordinating disparate activities by disseminating priorities and explaining the importance of particular objectives;
- Communicating national interests and intentions to reassure allies, deter adversaries and reduce the likelihood of miscalculation;
- Improving the accountability of policies and leaders by providing benchmarks by which success or failure may be evaluated; and
- Forcing decisionmakers to think systematically about the medium to long term, instead of focusing merely on urgent short-term pressures.

Grand strategies are holistic and make broad connections among regions, issues, and domestic and foreign policy. Whereas the practical need to manage foreign policy requires bureaucracies to chop regions and issues into manageable bits, grand strategy can help policymakers see how the pieces fit together. This broader vision enables policymakers to view connections and points of leverage that they might not have detected otherwise.

Grand strategies are not, and should not be, static. Because grand strategies connect national means to national ends in particular international and domestic contexts, they should evolve with circumstances even as they keep policymakers focused on medium- to long-term objectives.[5] In this way, grand strategizing is more important than having a grand strategy per se.

Thus, grand strategies do not constitute an off-the-shelf blueprint for operating in international affairs; rather, they lay out a vision for how American power can be used to pursue national

interests and values in a shifting global environment. If the interests of the nation, its capacities or important features in the international environment change beyond a certain extent – as with the collapse of the Soviet Union – the prevailing strategy may be rendered invalid. Thus strategists must continually judge whether changes require mere adjustments to a strategy or constitute inflection points that call for an entirely new approach.

Whereas the practical need to manage foreign policy requires bureaucracies to chop regions and issues into manageable bits, grand strategy can help policymakers see how the pieces fit together.

Does the United States need a new grand strategy? The authors in this volume disagree about the answer to that question. Feaver says no, arguing that America should embrace the strategy of preserving the international order that has guided the United States throughout the post-Cold War era. He calls for adjustments on the margins, including steps to restore lost leverage in key regions like the Middle East, a more focused effort to fix America's fiscal problems and resistance to deep cuts in defense spending. Art favors a strategy of selective engagement, one that implies activist global leadership for the United States but also factors in America's diminished status as a superpower. By contrast, Betts calls for limited retrenchment and greater American restraint in foreign policy in order to conserve American power and husband the economic resources necessary to exercise leadership. Meanwhile, Slaughter argues for a grand strategy of "network centrality," maintaining that the most important international shift in the 21st century is neither the rise of China nor the realignment of global power, but rather the rise of global networks, which include government officials, corporations, financial institutions, nongovernmental organizations, terrorists and others. The United States can best pursue its interests, Slaughter says, by positioning itself close to the center of the political, military, diplomatic, economic and social networks that most affect its interests.[6]

America in the World

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Grand strategies start with an assessment of the international and domestic environments, both present and future. To a large degree, the contributors to this volume agree in their assessments. All recognize the rise of new powers relative to the United States, particularly in the economic sphere. All concur that the United States will remain the world's military and economic superpower in the near term, and none of them would argue that America is in decline. All concur that the United States is not powerful enough to dictate global outcomes and must work with others wherever possible to achieve common goals. Each recognizes the deep fiscal difficulties facing the United States at home and how these difficulties undermine American power.

Each of the four authors also sees differences in the strategic environment. Betts emphasizes the relative security of today's world in contrast to past decades and therefore believes that a less interventionist foreign policy is warranted. Art sees a world that demands the provision of collective goods, such as freedom of the seas and peace among great powers, and believes that America should continue its role in supplying them. Feaver observes a strategic

environment in which the greatest long-term threat to the United States is the emergence of a hostile peer rival that could rewrite the global order and argues that America's two-decade approach of combining military strength with selectively accommodating would-be rivals remains the best path to avoid this outcome. Slaughter rejects a view of the global environment that focuses only on states and the potential rise of a peer competitor as the most important shift in the international system. She argues instead for a network perspective in which the rise of criminal, economic, political and social networks is transforming both the international system itself and the role of states within it. Instead of poles in a unipolar, bipolar or multipolar system, Slaughter argues, states should be analyzed as the principal hubs of these intersecting networks. A state's ability to position itself as close to the center of critical networks as possible and to mobilize, orchestrate and create networks will prove a vital source of power.

AMERICAN INTERESTS

The authors in this volume generally agree that enduring American interests include the following goals:

- Preventing and deterring attacks on the homeland,
- Preventing war among great powers,
- Maintaining the security of allies and key partners,
- Containing the spread of weapons of mass destruction,
- Managing the rise of peer competitors such as China and
- Ensuring an open international economic system.

Nevertheless, the authors prioritize these interests in different ways. Betts emphasizes two overarching "vital" interests: homeland security and "strategic solvency" – keeping America's external commitments in line with the domestic resources available to back them. He characterizes other interests, such as spreading liberal democracy and providing relief in humanitarian disasters, as merely "nice to have." In contrast, the other writers cite promoting respect for human rights and supporting democracy abroad as key, longstanding U.S. interests that deserve continued priority in U.S. policy. Slaughter, for instance, observes that respect for universal values is a core U.S. national interest not merely for moral reasons but also because a freer world is a safer and more prosperous one for Americans. In addition to all of those interests, Feaver highlights the need for energy security and honoring treaty obligations, and Art calls for the United States to work to prevent mass atrocities in civil wars and to avert severe climate change.

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Most American strategists agree that America must exert leadership in the world, and the four authors in this volume are no exception. Yet how they define leadership varies. Art favors a highly engaged form of American leadership, with a forward defense posture (including maintaining key alliances and deploying American troops abroad) and with the United States continuing to provide a leadership role by contributing to the provision of collective goods. In contrast, Betts argues that the emphasis on supplying collective goods is overstated; America should remain a global leader, he writes, but it is a mistake to equate leadership with imposing U.S. control. America should, Betts believes, conserve its primacy and husband its resources by scaling down American efforts abroad.

Feaver takes an expansive view of American leadership, writing that the United States should engage internationally to help preserve global order even when its narrowly construed interests are not at stake. If America chooses not to lead, he argues,

no one else will do so – and problems that originate as secondary to American interests can turn into direct threats. Policymakers tend to overstate the risks of intervention, Feaver writes, and discount the costs of inaction.

Slaughter argues that in a world of deep global interdependence, the United States must ensure the security not only of its territory and citizens but also of its allies and partners. It must lead in advancing human rights and an open international economy. Exercising this leadership, in Slaughter's view, requires the United States to be the "central node" in a variety of networks – in global security by working through NATO and its other partners, in economic terms by applying pressure and generating leverage through financial networks, and in diplomacy by building informal groupings of governments and strengthening regional organizations.

DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS

Given the prevailing pressures for economic austerity, the authors underscore the domestic constraints on American grand strategy. Art, for example, cites studies indicating that America will not fully recover from the 2008 financial crisis for at least another two or three years, and he notes that America's serious fiscal situation limits the resources that it can devote to foreign policy and military power. Betts notes not only America's economic troubles but also the political paralysis that has prevented their resolution.

The writers emphasize that America should exercise its leadership selectively and recognize that overextension will drain American power in ways that will ultimately undermine the nation's interests. They disagree, however, on the implications of austerity and what constitutes overextension on the part of the United States. Art argues that austerity should induce America to curtail state-building enterprises such as the U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but that America can and should continue to provide the collective goods on which the world relies. By contrast, Betts argues that "economic disarray" makes it necessary to scale down American efforts abroad, and he calls for focusing American power on deterrence rather than on preventive war and supplying collective goods. In his view, the need to maintain economic solvency demands significant reductions in the resources allocated to external purposes. Feaver observes that America cannot solve its fiscal woes simply by cutting defense spending and that to cut such spending too deeply would put at risk the grand strategy that has served America well since the end of the Cold War.

INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

The four authors emphasize the use of different instruments of power to achieve national ends. Slaughter highlights the ability of American actors, both governmental and nongovernmental, to shape, convene and act within networks, whether military, economic or diplomatic. Feaver emphasizes the "velvet fist" – the combination of defense spending in excess of what is needed to meet near-term threats with a strategy of accommodating would-be rivals in the global order. Art stresses the traditional military, economic and diplomatic tools of statecraft but contends that they should be directed at supplying collective goods rather than at nation building. Betts emphasizes economic, diplomatic and political action and recommends that the United States be involved less often in military action. Indeed, he recommends scaling down standing military forces and being more judicious in making security guarantees to U.S. allies. Most of the authors focus, to varying degrees, on American "soft power" – the ability to influence through the power of attraction rather than the power of coercion. They stress the importance of achieving security not only through a strong defense but also through other means of leverage and engagement, such as the building of relationships, public diplomacy and the power of ideas.

Conclusion

Grand strategy weaves together the many threads of foreign and domestic policy with the aim of pursuing American interests and values more effectively. Although intellectually appealing, this way of thinking is difficult to translate into practice. The combined effects of politics and the policymaking process tend to disaggregate policies, ignoring the linkages between fiscal policy and national strength, austerity and the ability to project power, the changing international environment and the definition of American interest. Bureaucracies tend to divide issues into narrow, discrete domains in ways that risk overlooking the interplay among them. At its best, a grand strategy portrays a more coherent whole.

Numerous global changes, coupled with the upcoming presidential election, provide an opportunity to revisit American grand strategy. At a time when policymakers and pundits ask fundamental questions about the nature of American power and purpose, now is also the moment to debate how to marry that power and that purpose. It is time, in other words, for a vigorous discussion of American grand strategy. Although this volume is merely a starting point, we hope that it will contribute to that debate.

ENDNOTES

1. Michèle A. Flournoy and Shawn Brimley, eds., "Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy" (Center for a New American Security, June 2008).

2. There are numerous well-known studies of how states have done this in the past. See Edward N. Luttwak, *Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979); Donald Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Viking Press, 2003); Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Richard Samuels, *Securing Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); and Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

3. This definition of grand strategy draws on John Lewis Gaddis, "What is Grand Strategy?" Karl Von Der Heyden Distinguished Lecture (Duke University, Durham, N.C., February 26, 2009), 7; Peter Feaver, "What is grand strategy and why do we need it," Shadow Government blog on ForeignPolicy.com, April 8, 2009, http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/08/what_is_grand_strategy_and_why_do_we_need_it; and Elbridge Colby, "Grand Strategy: Contending Contemporary Analyst Views and Implications for the U.S. Navy" (Center for Naval Analyses, November 2011), 6-8.

4. These points draw on Barry Posen, "A Grand Strategy of Restraint," in eds. Flournoy and Brimley, "Finding Our Way."

5. Murray and Grimsely refer to the development of strategy as "the constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate." Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, "Introduction: On Strategy," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War,* eds. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox and Alvin Bernstein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

6. Slaughter gives examples of how the United States can pursue its interests through such positioning in global networks. For instance, she argues that NATO is becoming the hub of a global security network able to both take action on its own and influence regional organizations to which it is connected.

CHAPTER I:
SELECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE ERA OF AUSTERITY

By Robert J. Art

America's Path

Grand Strategy for the Next Administration

SELECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE ERA OF AUSTERITY

By Robert J. Art

America's unipolar moment is over. It began with the breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and ended with the collapse of Lehman Brothers on September 15, 2008. During these 17 years, the United States had no military peer, its economy did quite well (as least during the first half of the period), and it fought one big war in the Persian Gulf and three lesser ones in the Balkans and Afghanistan. For most of this period, America's political-economic model – democratic capitalism – was heralded as the best way to organize a society. The country did pretty much as it wished on the international stage, even when its actions were opposed by others, acting multilaterally when possible and unilaterally when necessary.

Although the United States was ascendant during this unipolar moment, it was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a global hegemon in the sense that the term is commonly used. That is, the United States could not take on all other great powers at once and defeat them. It was, instead, a superpower: a state that can project military power to several regions simultaneously and that is the most powerful military actor in those regions. Moreover, because it was a superpower, the United States was a hegemon in the second sense of that term – the sense the Greeks meant: a leader. In the unipolar era, America's dominating military and economic power did not yield omnipotence, but it did underwrite a powerful global leadership role.

The Current and Future Environment

The United States will, for at least the next decade or two, remain the world's only superpower when both military and economic dimensions are taken into account. Its position will be diminished, however, compared with its position during the unipolar era for a number of reasons, of which three are particularly important.

First, America's current serious fiscal situation, in the making since 2002, will constrain the resources that the country can devote to its foreign policy

and military power.[1] The 2008-2009 financial crisis magnified America's underlying fiscal problems. According to the best research on financial crises, the United States will not begin to recover fully from this crisis until at least 2014 or 2015, if history is an accurate guide.[2] Even then, the structural imbalance between revenues and spending will not be solved without significant budget cuts. Defense spending will be under continuous budgetary pressure because it accounts for over half of discretionary (that is, nonentitlement) spending, 19 percent of the federal budget and 4.7 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). Such pressure is especially likely because the cuts made to the Department of Defense's budget for the past two fiscal years amounted to only 2.4 percent in real (inflation-adjusted) terms and are projected to remain constant (keeping up with inflation). The touted $487 billion projected cut in defense spending over a 10-year period is actually a cut from a budget proposed by the Pentagon in February 2011 that projected real increases in the defense budget and was never approved by Congress.[3] Thus, given the fact that defense spending has not taken a significant hit, it is highly likely that more severe cuts are in the cards.

Second, the current trends in the global distribution of power magnify the effects of America's economic troubles at home. The world today is economically bipolar – the United States and the European Union (EU) are roughly equal in GDP when measured in nominal dollars. However, within the next decade or two, the world will be at least economically tripolar, provided the EU does not break up and China's nominal GDP ($5.93 trillion in 2010, compared with America's $14.59 trillion) continues to grow at the 7 percent rate that the Communist party has projected in its current five-year plan.[4] Depending on which study one consults, if present trends continue, China's GDP (in nominal dollars) will surpass America's somewhere between 2020 and 2030.[5] Thus, because America's fiscal troubles will take the better part of a decade to solve, and because the economic power of China and India will increase (though how much is uncertain), the global distribution of economic power will be less advantageous to the United States in the next two decades than it was in the previous two.

Third, the United States is likely to retain its military dominance much longer than its economic dominance, given its overwhelming lead and the time it will take China or any other great power to build a military of global reach. Yet eventually, some form of military multipolarity will likely emerge, although no one can now say with any precision when that will occur. What is clear, however, is that the United States will face a tough challenge from China in maintaining maritime supremacy in East Asia. If China's economy continues to grow rapidly and its leadership continues to channel some of those growing economic resources into military modernization, this will increasingly constrain what the United States can do in East Asia, cause it to divert even more defense resources to East Asia than is currently planned and, by diverting scarce defense resources there, affect the U.S. military presence elsewhere in the world.

Still, the outlook over the next decade for the United States is not entirely grim because the country retains considerable advantages. Largely as a result of its immigration policies, the United States will age less rapidly than all the other great powers, including China, with all the positive ramifications in economic innovation, economic competitiveness and usable military manpower that this implies.[6] The United States retains an entrepreneurial spirit, a hard-working populace and a significant lead in many of the technologies of the future. It also still retains a considerable share of the world's manufacturing base.[7] Moreover, it is not clear that China can escape the "middle-income trap" (whereby its economic growth rate slows significantly) and

continue its double-digit growth rates for the next decade or two.[8] The fact that the Communist party has downgraded China's projected growth rate to 7 percent in the current five-year plan reflects its view that slower economic growth may occur.

Over the next 10 years, the United States will likely remain the world's most powerful state, but its relative edge will wane to some degree, global power will become less concentrated and, as a consequence, the United States will have less freedom to operate unimpeded around the world than it did during the unipolar era.[9] Although no one knows how successful America will be in fixing its economic and fiscal ills, nor how powerful other states might become, prudence dictates some adjustment in the nation's international ambitions. Let us therefore begin with an assessment of what America's national interests are today.

Selective Engagement and U.S. National Interests

Twenty years ago, I laid out a grand strategy for the United States that I believe remains relevant today, albeit with some modifications.[10] This strategy posited six U.S. national interests and argued that a forward defense posture was the best way to advance these interests. I concluded that after the Cold War, the United States needed to continue with an activist, internationalist, global leadership policy rather than retreating into isolationism or offshore balancing. I put these three components together – six national interests, a forward defense posture and U.S. global leadership – and called the resulting strategy "selective engagement."

The following six foreign policy goals remain in the best interests of the United States:

- Protect the homeland from attack, which requires that the United States prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), especially nuclear and biological weapons, and keep such weapons out of the hands of terrorists, as well as thwarting a devastating cyber attack on the homeland.
- Maintain a deep peace among the Eurasian great powers, which requires that the United States retain its two central alliances at either end of Eurasia – NATO and the U.S.-Japan alliance.
- Preserve assured access to stable supplies of oil, which requires that the United States prevent any state, either within the Middle East or elsewhere, from acquiring hegemony over Persian Gulf oil supplies.
- Preserve an open international economic order, which requires that the United States maintain its commitment to international economic openness and use its military power in ways that preserve global stability.
- Spread democracy and the rule of law, protect human rights and prevent mass murders in civil wars – goals that require that the United States help foster political liberalization and the rule of law within other nations and promote the economic development that helps to create the large middle classes on which stable democracy depends. The United States should also act in concert with other states to stop or prevent mass murder in ethnic and civil wars that have already begun or are highly likely to occur.
- Avert severe climate change, which requires that the United States and the rest of the world first cut, and then stabilize, the emissions of CO_2 and its equivalents into the atmosphere to levels that avoid severe climate change.

Why are these national interests crucial to the United States? Clearly, the country must do all it can to protect the homeland from attack – the prime directive of any grand strategy – especially from a WMD attack by a terrorist group or a devastating state-sponsored cyber attack. It is also in America's interest to preserve as deep a peace as possible among the great Eurasian powers because any war among them would be deeply

destabilizing and costly and would risk drawing in the United States in one way or another. The United States also has a vested interest in avoiding intense security competitions among these states because such competitions could lead those states to acquire WMD. Assured access to oil supplies for air, sea and land transportation is essential to the global economy until the world can wean itself off its heavy dependence on oil for transportation, something that is going to take decades, even with the greater push to switch to renewable energy sources.[11] An open economic order contributes to U.S. prosperity, but it also contributes to global economic growth and prosperity, both of which help promote peace. Spreading democracy and the rule of law within states will make for a more peaceful and prosperous world and will also lessen the need for costly military interventions because democracies are less likely than nondemocracies to commit human rights abuses against their own populaces. Finally, averting severe climate change is in the best interest of the United States because of the risks involved in kicking the earth into a new, irreversible and adverse climatic state (even though under moderate climate-change scenarios, the United States will suffer less than developing states and many of the other great powers).

After presenting these national interests, I proposed that a forward defense posture – retaining America's key alliances and deploying American troops abroad, both onshore and afloat in three key regions (East Asia, the Middle East and Europe) – would better realize and protect these interests than would a grand strategy of isolationism or offshore balancing, both of which entail America ending its military alliances and bringing its troops home. In my usage, both isolationism and offshore balancing are strategies in which the United States would have no standing military commitments in peacetime to defend other states and no forward bases abroad.[12] The U.S. Navy might steam the seven seas, but all other U.S. troops would be at home, and there would be no standing military alliances or permanent overseas military bases.[13]

Selective engagement argues for retaining key American alliances, not only because they enable a forward defense posture but also because they are tools of political management and enhance cooperative solutions to regional security issues.

Forward defense requires bases abroad and allies. Therefore, selective engagement argues for retaining key American alliances, not only because they enable a forward defense posture but also because they are tools of political management and enhance cooperative solutions to regional security issues. In this view, key alliances retain enduring value. They ensure U.S. access to overseas bases where needed, facilitate joint training in peacetime (and, consequently, joint operations in wartime), promote transparency and a more open security dialogue, and help to structure expectations and develop shared attitudes about problem solving. Standing alliances clearly experience difficulties and conflicts among their members, but they are generally more reliable tools for projecting power into key regions than are ad hoc, informal arrangements (although those can also be useful under certain conditions).

I favor an in-theater military presence, either afloat or onshore because, in my view, America's

regional alliances retain greater credibility – and are therefore stronger for reassurance and deterrence purposes – with some U.S. forces in a region than with U.S. military guarantees but no forces in the region. Credibility is a function of will and capability. In-theater forces enhance capability but are probably more important for what they signify about will. Such forces are tangible and, therefore, more politically salient as manifestations of political will than simple pledges on paper would be. In-theater forces are akin to actions speaking louder than words.

Finally, the United States must continue to provide global leadership. Without such leadership, solutions to global collective action problems – whether they involve security or nonsecurity issues – are unlikely to arise. International politics is still organized around the state model; consequently, states remain the primary, although certainly not the only, actors in world politics. The United States is, and will continue for some time to be, the world's most powerful state; therefore, its actions and inactions strongly influence whether international initiatives will succeed or fail. If the leader does not lead, things do not get done. By the same token, however, the leader cannot get others to follow unless it takes the interests of allies and other important parties into account when formulating policies and taking action, instead of simply consulting after it has decided on a course of action. Thus, although the United States has to lead, it also has to avoid excessive unilateralism.

In sum, as I envision it, selective engagement is a strategy that seeks to shape events in East Asia, the Middle East and Europe by projecting U.S. military power to those regions, rather than simply reacting to adverse events there as they occur. Although they are not the only shaping instruments available, military alliances and commitments – together with in-theater forces, either semi-permanently afloat or onshore – are crucial for shaping political developments in a region. Shaping, however, does not mean control. Hegemons control; superpowers, if they are successful, only shape.

Selective Engagement Today

The strategy of selective engagement needs to be adapted for this era of austerity and diffusion of power. That adaptation will require the United States to limit its global political-military role, primarily in state-building enterprises, although not in the provision of international collective goods, which, for America's best interests, must continue.

The purpose of selective engagement is to protect the six U.S. national interests enumerated above. However, a key feature of these goals is that, by and large, they are also in the interests of a significant percentage of the world's states. With the possible exception of the fifth goal, spreading democracy and the rule of law, what is good for the United States is mostly good for the world. (Even the first goal, protecting the homeland, is a global interest, because if a terrorist group can attack the United States with a weapon of mass destruction, it can attack other states as well.) Thus, five of the six U.S. national interests are, essentially, global interests – or international collective goods. They center on relations among states, on creating a framework for a stable and prosperous global economy and on combating threats that states share. It is only spreading democracy that involves intervening in the affairs of states and that creates the greatest conflict between U. S. interests and those of other states, democratic or not.

The major adaptation of U.S. grand strategy to the new era, therefore, is to eschew *forceful* (military) exercises in democracy promotion and state-building. Such exercises consume time and resources and do not have a stellar track record; I argued 20 years ago that they should be largely avoided.[14] Instead, the United States should concentrate on those goals that stand a better chance of mustering the support of both America's allies and the global

community. Thus, in an era when U.S. resources need to be husbanded, forceful state building should be avoided in favor of political-economic assistance.[15]

To advance its own national interests in this new era, the United States should center its grand strategy on four global collective goods, all of which require power projection in some form:[16] (1) preventing the spread of nuclear weapons; (2) keeping the deep peace in Europe, deepening the peace in East Asia and, if possible, keeping the peace in the Persian Gulf; (3) preserving two elements of a stable framework for an open international economic order – freedom of the seas and assured access to Persian Gulf oil; and (4) containing, if not also destroying, al Qaeda or any other group that plans terrorist actions against the U.S. homeland.[17] Many different types of policies – including political, economic and military ones – contribute to producing these collective goods, but I concentrate here on the contributions of a U.S. forward defense posture because that affects most directly the cost and ambition of a U.S. grand strategy.

STOP OR RETARD THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The top priority for U.S. grand strategy is to prevent a WMD attack, especially a nuclear attack, on an American city or an ally's city. The best way to do this is to keep fissile material and warheads out of the hands of any terrorist group that aspires to obtain a nuclear weapon and would use it if it had one. There are many ways to do this, including programs like the Nunn-Lugar program to secure and dismantle fissile materials in the former Soviet Union or the steps proposed by the Obama administration to strengthen state controls over fissile materials.[18] All other things being equal, the greater the number of states that acquire nuclear weapons, the greater the likelihood that fanatical terrorists could obtain those weapons or the fissile material needed to make them. Wider ownership increases the chances of undesirable ownership of warheads or fissile material through theft, sale or outright transfer. A world with fewer nuclear-armed states is safer than one with a larger number of nuclear-armed states.

In terms of nuclear spread, two regions of the world currently pose special concerns: East Asia and the Middle East. The U.S. alliance with Japan is the cornerstone of U.S. grand strategy in East Asia and a major tool in dissuading Japan from acquiring nuclear weapons. The end of the U.S-Japan alliance would not automatically lead to a nuclear-armed Japan, but it would clearly increase the chances of this, especially because Japan made a decision after the Cold War's end to forego an independent nuclear deterrent because it calculated that it could rely on the U.S. nuclear umbrella.[19] The Middle East is equally worrisome, should Iran acquire nuclear weapons. A February 2008 staff report of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations concluded that an Iranian nuclear bomb would "almost certainly lead to a Saudi bomb" if the United States did not take actions to guarantee Saudi security, that a Saudi bomb would increase pressure on Egypt to acquire its own because a Saudi bomb would "represent a uniquely threatening challenge to Egypt's self-conception and regional influence," and that an Iranian bomb would "place significant pressure on Turkey to follow suit."[20] An Iran gone nuclear would enhance the chances of cascade effects in the region.

To deal with the fallout from an Iranian nuclear weapon and to avoid further nuclear spread within the Middle East, the United States would (or will) need to take on new commitments in the region or, at the minimum, strengthen existing ones and make clear that its nuclear umbrella extends over those states that feel threatened by Iran's nuclear force.[21] Indeed, U.S. policy has already moved in that direction. Speaking in Thailand on July 22, 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said that the United States would consider extending a "defense umbrella" over the Middle East if

Iran continued with work that could lead to nuclear weapons. Administration officials in Washington subsequently made clear that this was the first public discussion of what had been privately discussed.[22]

Thus, U.S. anti-proliferation efforts in both East Asia and the Middle East require power projection – for East Asia, in the form of in-theater forces; for the Middle East, in the form of a credible over-the-horizon presence, combined with a small onshore presence (as discussed below).

KEEP REGIONAL PEACE IN EUROPE, EAST ASIA AND THE PERSIAN GULF

A second collective good is to help keep the peace in Europe, deepen the peace in East Asia and work to keep the peace in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. As of December 31, 2011, the United States had 1,568,000 active-duty personnel, of which 1,217,000 were in the continental United States and its territories and the remaining 351,000 were based in and around foreign countries.[23] Of the 351,000 personnel abroad, 102,000 were in Afghanistan, and 15,000 were in Kuwait – the former for counterinsurgency operations and the latter as a consequence of the winding down of the Iraq war. For the purposes of regional peace (which excludes the war-waging troops in Afghanistan), the United States has stationed about 80,000 troops in Europe, the bulk of which are in Germany, Italy and England; 89,000 troops in East Asia, of which 35,000 are in Japan; 37,500 in South Korea and 14,000 afloat; and about 5,500 troops in and around the Persian Gulf.[24] This means that of the approximately 235,000 troops stationed abroad on a peacetime presence mission, 175,000 are stationed in Europe, East Asia and the Gulf. This regional peace mission consumes 11 percent of total active-duty military personnel.

The purpose of this peacetime regional presence is to shape political events in each of these three regions in three ways: to deter attacks on U.S. allies; to reassure key regional actors, primarily U.S. allies, of U.S. support to help buffer the region from destabilizing influences; and to enhance regional security cooperation and management. If these three mechanisms work well, they can help dampen, although not end, military competition within these regions. A peacetime regional presence has a fourth benefit: Should military action become necessary, this presence facilitates war waging through the advantages of joint training, in-theater bases, and the like.

Deterrence and reassurance are the main mechanisms in the Middle East and East Asia because regional security cooperation is not well developed in either place. In Europe, regional security cooperation is well advanced and institutionalized, both within NATO and, increasingly, within the EU through the European Security and Defense Policy. The size of U.S. forces in each region is determined not only by the military missions the forces are capable of performing in the event of war, but also by political judgments as to what looks credible enough to deter and reassure. The peacetime regional presence of U.S. forces, both ashore and afloat, is akin to gravity: It deeply affects the political contours of a region, but its effects are difficult to readily discern. Finally, in these three regions, most, but not all, states welcome the U.S. in-theater presence. Even China still prefers some U.S. presence in East Asia in order to contain Japan.

In this era of austerity, devoting 11 percent of U.S. combat forces to the peacetime regional presence mission may be too expensive. Clearly, U.S. forces in Europe can and should be drawn down significantly, although not entirely removed.[25] Europe is in a deep peace, and Russia does not present a military threat of invasion. Reassuring Europeans, however, does not require the 70,000 to 73,000 U.S. troops that will be left there once two heavy Army brigades are withdrawn.[26] In East Asia, the United States has been bolstering its maritime forces – and correctly so – in order to deal with China's growing maritime power. The Middle East will soon

have a small footprint, assuming no war with Iran. Whether 5,500 American troops are too much for the host nations to bear is not clear, although the Gulf sheikdoms – especially Bahrain and Kuwait, where the bulk of the troops are located – generally welcome the U.S. military presence. What is clear is the need to keep the onshore footprint in the Gulf as small as possible or, if that proves not to be feasible, to move to an over-the-horizon presence.[27]

MAINTAIN FREEDOM OF THE SEAS AND ASSURED ACCESS TO PERSIAN GULF OIL

The third collective good that the United States should continue to help provide consists of two elements that are crucial to a stable framework for an open and prosperous international economic order: freedom of the seas and assured access to Persian Gulf oil. These are collective goods in their own right, and the United States has been the major, if not sole, provider of both for many decades. The United States and the world benefit.

Over 90 percent of the world's commerce and two-thirds of its petroleum travel by sea.[28] In the United States alone, 10 to 12 million seaborne cargo containers enter the country each year. Indeed, total seaborne trade has increased more than four-fold over the past four decades,[29] with cargo volumes almost doubling over the past 15 years.[30] At the turn of the 21st century, merchant shipping grew at an annual rate of 22 percent,[31] and despite the economic stresses of 2008-2009, the total world merchant fleet still expanded by 7 percent in 2009.[32] Although exact estimates prove difficult to ascertain, the most recent World Trade Organization data (2004) valued merchant shipping at close to $430 billion.[33] Significantly, 2006 data estimate that world maritime transportation exports made up 43 percent of all transportation services exports.[34]

The seaborne trade sector is large and growing. Trade – imports and exports –accounts for 19 percent of total U.S. economic activity.[35] Trade is also important to the other great powers of the world, and it constitutes a greater share of their GDPs than it does in the United States. The EU is the world's largest importer and exporter, and China, the United States and Germany are the largest national state importers and exporters. In terms of seaborne trade, the United States is by no means the clear leader. Chinese containerized exports constitute one-fourth of the global total.[36] Asia on the whole dominates other regions in terms of goods loaded, with a 41 percent share of the world total.[37] Furthermore, as of 2008, the United States was third in the World Trade Organization's ranking of leading maritime countries in terms of fleet size. Greece and Japan were first and second, respectively, with Norway, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Germany and Russia filling out the top 10 maritime countries.[38] Figures from 2009 show that not one of the 20 largest liner shipping companies was based in the United States, and only one U.S. company ranked as a leading bulk cargo shipping line.[39] Freedom of the seas is a true collective good.

Assured access to Persian Gulf oil is a second central ingredient to an open and prosperous international economic order because the Persian Gulf contains about two-thirds of the world's proven oil reserves and over a third of the world's proven natural gas reserves.[40] The United States has experienced a significant increase in both oil and natural gas supplies as a result of the discovery and exploitation of huge shale deposits that contain oil and gas. The United States may even become energy independent, or close to it, over the next decade or two.[41] However, because the rest of the world, as well as the United States, will have to rely on oil for transportation for the next several decades, the world economy needs assurance of stable and secure supplies. Market forces largely determine supply and demand, and hence price, on a daily basis, and the market, as Eugene Gholz and Daryl Press demonstrate, has been good at smoothing

supply disruptions.[42] Yet oil access has never been left entirely to the market; political factors and military power have always intervened and played a significant role in oil supplies in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere.

The threat to Gulf oil supplies is much reduced now that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power and Iran's conventional forces are weak. However, even Gholz and Press, who argue that the United States need not maintain peacetime deployments in the Persian Gulf to deter Iran from threatening tanker egress out of the Gulf, state: "At most, U.S. energy interests require an offshore air and naval presence nearby."[43] That is power projection and an in-theater (or nearby theater) presence by another name.

In sum, freedom of the seas and assured access to Persian Gulf oil require a strong U.S. Navy to ply the seas.

CONTAIN AND DEFEAT AL QAEDA

The final collective good that the United States should continue to help provide is the containment, and preferably totally defeat, of al Qaeda and its local affiliates that plan attacks against Americans abroad or the U.S. homeland. For our purposes, there are two central questions to ask: 1. What does al Qaeda want? 2. How much of an "away game" does the United States need to play to achieve its objectives of containing and defeating al Qaeda?

Al Qaeda's central goal is to evict the West from Muslim lands – all Muslim lands – so that it can topple the Muslim regimes that are hostile to its vision of a good Muslim society. Its goal, in short, has been to recreate the caliphate of the eighth to ninth centuries. Al Qaeda chose to go after the United States because of its central role in propping up or supporting these regimes, and, as a consequence, the United States found itself caught in a Muslim civil war or insurgency. If the United States removed its combat forces from Arab and Muslim lands, would that stop al Qaeda from attacking Americans abroad or planning attacks against the United States? No one knows the answer to that question, but it seems likely that if the United States still provides support (via security assistance, economic aid or intelligence support) for the regimes that al Qaeda wants to topple, the United States will remain an al Qaeda target.[44]

Freedom of the seas and assured access to Persian Gulf oil require a strong U.S. Navy to ply the seas.

Today, "al Qaeda central" is a much diminished organization as a result of the death of Osama bin Laden, the drone strikes in Pakistan and the cooperation among national intelligence agencies, but it is not totally down and out. Moreover, its regional affiliates, especially al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, still threaten Americans abroad and potentially the U.S. homeland.[45] In my view, it is therefore axiomatic that the United States needs to project military power abroad to go after al Qaeda.

However, that does not mean that military power is the silver bullet to defeat al Qaeda, that projection of military power means waging large-scale counterinsurgency wars wherever an al Qaeda cell exists, that political approaches are unimportant or that homeland defenses do not need to be strengthened. To the extent that force is necessary to defeat al Qaeda, it should involve close police and intelligence cooperation with other states, heavy reliance on the capabilities of other states to deal with their indigenous al Qaeda operatives, and the use of U.S. special operations forces and covert

CIA operations to supplement host states' forces, as has been the case in Yemen and Somalia. The main point, however, is that we cannot simply play an "at home game" to deal with al Qaeda or any other terrorist group that aims to harm the United States. Some type of "away game," which involves the projection of U.S. military power, operating from overseas bases, onshore or afloat, is inescapable. With al Qaeda and its affiliates, either the United States wins or they do.

Conclusions

A strategy of selective engagement, not a retreat into offshore balancing (as I have defined it), will best serve America's interests in the coming decades. If the United States does not take the lead in helping to provide the collective goods enumerated above, they will not receive sufficient attention, and both America's interests and the world's will be worse off. However, this is not a call for the United States to be the world's policeman, nor to bear the burden of collective goods alone. Instead, it is a call to avoid the wholesale withdrawal of American military power from abroad and a plea for continued American leadership.

Successfully implementing the selective engagement strategy will depend on providing satisfactory answers to three critical issues:

How can the U.S. defense budget be cut further without undercutting the core missions of selective engagement? This is important to do because, as stated earlier, the defense budget will most likely take more cuts than the current $487 billion over 10 years, especially because that was such a marginal cut in real spending.[46]

Can some U.S. commitments, apart from the core ones in Europe, East Asia and the Persian Gulf, be curtailed and can U.S. bases abroad be downsized even more? This is important because according to the Defense Department, the United States still has 611 bases abroad.[47]

What exactly should a more trimmed-down, fiscally sustainable selective engagement force look like? This is important because of the need to convince U.S. allies and potential adversaries abroad that the United States has both the will and the wherewithal to sustain a slimmed down selective engagement strategy.[48]

Whether Democrat or Republican, the next administration must seriously address these issues.

If these issues are not successfully addressed, selective engagement will fail, and America's national interests will be harmed grievously. The George W. Bush administration had too expansive a vision for America's role in the world. The danger the United States faces now is having austerity cause the nation to adopt an overly restrictive role in the world. The trimmed-down version of selective engagement offered here strikes a good balance between trying to do too much and settling for doing too little. However diminished American power will be over the next decade, the United States will remain the greatest of the great powers and should continue to act to shape the international environment in ways that are consistent with its interests.

ENDNOTES

1. See Michael Mandelbaum, *The Frugal Superpower: America's Global Leadership in a Cash-Strapped Era* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2010), Chapter 1, for an overview of America's dismal fiscal situation and economic outlook and the constraints they will place on American foreign policy.

2. See Carmen M. Reinhart and Kenneth S. Rogoff, *This Time is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 224-226. The authors note (on page 224) that "financial crises are protracted affairs" and that the duration of housing price declines has averaged six years.

3. Overall, the defense budget reached its peak of the past 15 years in fiscal year 2010. The cuts in fiscal years 2011 and 2012 represent a real 2.4 percent cut from that peak. I am deeply indebted to Cindy Williams, principal research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Security Studies Program, for pointing this out to me and walking me through the intricacies of defense budgeting. See Douglas W. Elmendorf, Director, Congressional Budget Office, "Discretionary Spending," Statement to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, U.S. Congress, October 26, 2011, 1; Todd Harrison, "Analysis of the FY 2012 Defense Budget" (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2011), 12; and Department of Defense, Fact Sheet: The Defense Budget (January 2012), http://www.defense.gov/news/Fact_Sheet_Budget.pdf.

4. In purchasing power parity figures, China's GDP in 2010 was $10.17 trillion; America's was $14.59 trillion. For various reasons, however, nominal figures probably indicate economic power better than do figures that compare purchasing power in different countries. Nominal and purchasing power parity figures come from the World Bank Development Indicators database, April 10, 2012.

5. In 2008, Goldman Sachs estimated that China's GDP will surpass America's in 2028, significantly sooner than its estimate of 2041 made in 2003. This was reaffirmed by Jim O'Neill, head of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, in 2011. In 2009, the Economist Intelligence Unit predicted China's GDP would surpass the U.S. GDP in 2021. In January 2010, PricewaterhouseCoopers said the crossover would occur in 2020. The Goldman Sachs data come from Chris Layne, "The Waning of American Hegemony – Myth or Reality?" *International Security*, 34 no. 1 (Summer 2009), 173; and Jim O'Neill, *The Growth Map: Economic Opportunity in the BRICs and Beyond* (New York: Portfolio, 2011). The PricewaterhouseCoopers estimate is taken from Kevin Hamlin and Li Yanping, "China Overtakes Japan as World's Second-Biggest Economy," *Bloomberg News*, August 16, 2010. The International Monetary Fund predicted that China's GDP in purchasing power parity terms would surpass the United States by 2016. See Brett Arends, "IMF Bombshell: Age of America Nears End," *MarketWatch*, April 25, 2011.

6. See Richard Jackson and Neil Howe, *The Graying of the Great Powers: Demography and Geopolitics in the 21st Century* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2008), 185-196.

7. In 2010, the U.S. share of the world's manufacturing in constant 2005 dollars was 18 percent, down from 26 percent in 1970. China's share was also 18 percent in 2010. Interestingly, the decline in manufacturing as a percentage of America's GDP, from 24 percent in 1970 to 13 percent in 2010, is close to the decline of world manufacturing as a percentage of world GDP, from 27 percent in 1970 to 16 percent in 2010 (figures rounded). Data are from the United Nations Statistics Division (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/dnllist.asp) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (http://ncf.uschamber.com/blog/2012/03/manufacturing%E2%80%99s-declining-share-gdp).

8. For the view that China will not escape the middle-income trap, see Ruchir Sharma, "China Slows Down, and Grows Up," *The New York Times*, April 26, 2012.

9. For a similar argument, see Robert J. Lieber, "Can the U.S. Retain Primacy?" *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 3 (2011), 23-36.

10. See Robert J. Art, "A Defensible Defense: America's Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *International Security*, 15 no. 4 (Spring 1991), 5-53; and Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

11. The International Energy Agency Outlook for 2011 says that world energy consumption will increase by 53 percent between 2008 and 2035 and that the renewable share of total energy use will only increase from 10 percent in 2008 to 14 percent of total energy use in 2035, with the rest taken up mainly by fossil fuels. See http://www.cia.gov/forecasts/ieo/pdf/0484%282011%29.pdf. The U.S. National Intelligence Council predicts that Persian Gulf oil production will grow by 43 percent between 2003 and 2025, and that oil, coal and natural gas will account, in roughly equal proportions, for the overwhelming amount of the increase in energy use by 2030. See National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025*, NIC 2008-003 (November 2008), 40-41.

12. In my usage, the two strategies differ mainly in how they would deal with a Eurasian power that makes a run for hegemony. Isolationists would be indifferent to such a change in the Eurasian balance of power; offshore balancers would go back to the region to stymie a would-be hegemon if that proved necessary.

13. Unfortunately, the term "offshore balancing" has come to mean two very different things. In its earlier usage, it meant no U.S. troops abroad and no binding military alliances in peacetime; this is my preferred usage. Recently, it has come to be defined as reducing American troops abroad (primarily in Europe) or repositioning American troops from ashore to afloat (primarily in the Persian Gulf). As best I can determine, the second sense of offshore balancing now being used is a more "selective" form of selective engagement, not a true offshore balancing posture. Therefore, those who now employ the term "offshore balancing" in the second sense and who argue for forces afloat in a region on a permanent, semi-permanent or rotational basis are still arguing for a forward defense posture, a component integral to the strategy of selective engagement.

14. For the track record of forcible democratization, see Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint," *International Studies Quarterly*, 50 (2006), 539-559; Alexander B. Downes and Jonathan Monten, "Freedom by Force: Foreign-Imposed Regime Change and Democratization" (unpublished manuscript, May 11, 2012), http://gwucpw.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/freedombyforce_gwu_cpworkshop.pdf; and Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig, "Against All Odds? The History of Imposed

Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 4 (2008), 321-347.

15. Or as Robert Gates, former Secretary of Defense, put it: "In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined'…" Thom Shanker, "Warning Against Wars Like Iraq and Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, February 25, 2011. The most recent defense strategic guidance reflects Gates' sentiments: "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations." See Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (January 2012), 6.

16. Power projection can take several forms: in-theater forces ashore or afloat, forces near the theater (over the horizon) that can quickly arrive in the theater or U.S.-based forces that can be rapidly deployed to the theater.

17. Achieving the second and third goals can also aid the goal of minimizing climate change. Making three key regions more peaceful could enable more resources to be diverted from war preparations or war waging to measures that can help reduce fossil fuel emissions, such as renewable energy sources. Of course, states in those regions may choose not to use freed up resources to mitigate climate change, but at least more peace creates the opportunity to do so.

18. I leave cyber attacks against the United States out of this discussion, not because it is an unimportant topic (it is very important) but because deterrence of and defense against cyber attacks do not generally depend on U.S. military power projection, with one significant exception: a U.S. declaratory stance that a devastating state cyber attack might well be met with an equally devastating U.S. retaliatory kinetic attack. This requires power projection forces, as called for in the strategy of selective engagement.

19. See Lewelyn Hughes, "Why Japan Will Not Go Nuclear (Yet)," *International Security*, 31 no. 4 (Spring 2007), 68 and 72-80.

20. Report to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Chain Reaction: Avoiding a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East,* 110th Cong., 2nd sess., February 2008, viii, ix, and x.

21. Barry Posen concludes, for example: "Should Iran become a nuclear power, both the immediate strategic risks and the proliferation risks can be addressed with a reinvigorated commitment of U.S. power to stability and security in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Such a commitment is reasonable given U.S. strategic interests in the region." Barry R. Posen, "A Nuclear-Armed Iran: A Difficult but Not Impossible Problem" (Century Foundation, December 2, 2006).

22. Mark Landler and David E. Sanger, "Clinton Speaks of Shielding Mideast from Iran," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2009.

23. These and subsequent deployment figures are from the Department of Defense, "Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and By Country (309A)" (December 31, 2011), http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/history/hst1112.pdf. South Korean figures come from Globalsecurity.org, http://www.globalsecuritiy.org/military/agency/dod/usfk.htm, as of December 8, 2011. Figures for Kuwait are as of January 2012 and come from the *Army Times*, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/01/army-kuwait-mobile-response-force-011412w/. All troop figures are rounded. The Pentagon deployment figures come out only in December and June.

24. The Defense Department does not include the 37,500 troops stationed in South Korea in its Active Duty Military Personnel Table because this is considered a United Nations operation. The South Korean figure comes from Globalsecurity.org (see note 23). For the Persian Gulf, I took the December 2011 figures for the Gulf (about 3,000) and added to it the 2,500 Marines that the administration plans to station in Kuwait as a reserve force, rather than using the 15,000 figure listed by Globalsecurity.org (see note 23).

25. The Obama administration is planning on removing two Army brigades from Europe, a total of 7,000 to 10,000 troops. Once the war in Afghanistan is over, that number can probably be reduced much further, as long as the United States retains a quick redeployment capability back to Europe should things unexpectedly go bad there. The number of U.S. troops in Europe should not go to zero, however, because Europe provides a good staging area for power projection into the Middle East, and those troops also provide reassurance to the Europeans.

26. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices* (January 2012), 6.

27. For a balanced assessment of the pros and cons of an onshore presence in the Gulf, see Daniel Byman, "A U.S. Military Withdrawal from the Greater Middle East," in *The Prudent Use of Power in American National Security Strategy,* eds. Stephen Van Evera and Sidharth Shah (Cambridge, MA: The Tobin Project, 2010), 157-175.

28. U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (October 2007), 3.

29. Ibid.

30. World Trade Organization Council for Trade in Services, "Maritime Transport Services. Background Note by the Secretariat," S/C/W/315 (Geneva: World Trade Organization, June 7, 2010), 8.

31. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretariat, "Review of Maritime Transport" (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2010), 3.

32. Ibid., xiv.

33. World Trade Organization Council for Trade in Services, "Maritime Transport Services," 2.

34. Ibid., 3.

35. CIA estimates for U.S. exports and imports in 2010 are, respectively, $1.511 trillion and $2.314 trillion (figures are rounded). In 2010, exports accounted for 10.4 percent of the U.S. GDP, and imports accounted for 15.8 percent of the U.S. GDP. See Central Intelligence Agency, *CIA World Factbook*, http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook.

36. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretariat, "Review of Maritime Transport," xiv.

37. Ibid., 7.

38. World Trade Organization Council for Trade in Services, "Maritime Transport Services," 12.

39. Ibid., 16-17.

40. According to the U.S. Energy Administration and the *CIA Factbook*, these percentages for the Persian Gulf are likely to decrease once the full extent of shale oil and gas reserves in the United States, Canada, China and elsewhere are known. See Edward L. Morse et al., "Energy 2020: North America, the New Middle East?" (Citi GPS: Global Perspective and Solutions, March 20, 2012), 29. For a short overview of the Morse et al. study, see Edward L. Morse, "Move Over OPEC – Here We Come," *The Wall Street Journal,* March 20, 2012.

41. See Morse et al., "Energy 2020," 7-36.

42. Eugene Gholz and Daryl G. Press, *Energy Alarmism: The Myths that Make Americans Worry about Oil*, Policy Analysis Paper #589 (The CATO Institute, April 5, 2007), 11-14.

43. Ibid., 16.

44. Support for this assertion can be found in a video by Adam Gadahn, a senior operative, spokesman and media advisor for al Qaeda (Adam Gadahn, "Legitimate Demands Part 2, Barack's Dilemma," June 20, 2010, available online at http://www.nefafoundation.org):

> First, you must pull every last one of your soldiers, spies, security advisors, trainers, attaches, contractors, robots, drones, and all other American personnel, ships and aircraft out of every Muslim land from Afghanistan to Zanzibar.
>
> Second, you must end all support – both moral and material – to Israel and bar your citizens from traveling to Occupied Palestine or settling there, and you must impose a blanket ban on American trade with the Zionist regime and investment in it.
>
> Third, you must stop all support and aid – be it military, political, or economic or otherwise – to the hated regimes of the Muslim world. This includes the so-called 'development aid'. . .
>
> Fourth, you must cease all interference in the religion, society, politics, economy and government of the Islamic world.
>
> Fifth, you must also put an end to all forms of American and American-sponsored interference in the educational curricula and information media of the Muslim world.
>
> And sixth, you must free all Muslim captives from your prisons, detention facilities and concentration camps, regardless of whether they have been recipients of what you call a 'fair' trial or not.
>
> Your refusal to release our prisoners or your failure to meet any of our other legitimate demands will means the continuation of our just struggle against your tyranny. . .

I am indebted to Mary Habeck of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, for bringing this material to my attention.

45. James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, "Unclassified Statement for the Record on the Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence," January 31, 2012, 2-3. According to Clapper, over the next two to three years, the global jihadist movement "will continue to be a dangerous transnational force, regardless of the status of core al-Qa'ida, its affiliates, and its allies. Terrorists groups and individuals sympathetic to the jihadist movement will have access to the recruits, financing, arms and explosives, and safe havens needed to execute operations." Ibid., 2. Clapper defines the "global jihadist movement" as "al-Qa'ida and like-minded groups." Ibid., 1. Dennis C. Blair, then Director of National Intelligence, testified in 2010 that if al Qaeda acquired WMD capabilities and the operatives trained to use them, "it will do so." See Dennis C. Blair, "Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence," February 2, 2010. For a more general assessment of U.S. counterterrorism efforts, see Audrey Kurth Cronin, "U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism," *Orbis*, 56 no. 2 (Spring 2012).

46. For one analysis of where the defense budget can be cut, see Sustainable Defense Task Force, "Debts, Deficits, & Defense: A Way Forward" (June 11, 2010), http://armscontrolcenter.org/media/Debt_Deficits_and_Defense.pdf.

47. Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report Fiscal Year 2011 Baseline*, 7, http://www.acq.osd.mil/ie/download/bsr/bsr2011baseline.pdf. Half of these bases are in Germany (194), Japan (108) and South Korea (82). The 611 figure appears not to include Iraq and Afghanistan. Other analysts believe the number to be significantly higher. See, for example, Nick Turse, "The Pentagon's Planet of Bases," TomDispatch.com, January 9, 2011, http://www.tomdispatch.com/archive/175338/. Turse puts the number at 1,075.

48. The Obama administration made a good start with its January 2012 *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership* document.

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CHAPTER II:
AMERICAN STRATEGY: GRAND VS. GRANDIOSE

By Richard K. Betts

America's Path

Grand Strategy for the Next Administration

AMERICAN STRATEGY: GRAND VS. GRANDIOSE

By Richard K. Betts

Since 1898, the United States has achieved a great deal by using its power for good purposes: promoting Western values, protecting other countries and shaping the world. Sometimes, however, it has lurched back and forth between doing too little and too much. In the 20th century, the challenges for national security policy were big ones: hostile great powers combined with alien ideologies. After World War I, American efforts to control world order were too weak: Withdrawal from the European balance of power helped to produce World War II. During the Cold War, American efforts were about right and ended in a victory that left the United States as the dominant power in the world, more fundamentally secure than ever before in its history. Yet more than 20 years later, inertia from that long experience still exerts a powerful effect on American policy, strategy and operations.

In 1945, it was both necessary and easy for the United States to take on wide-scale military activism; today, it is neither. In 1945, the United States had an invigorated economy, fully half of the war-ravaged world's economic output and a credible plan for retiring national debt – all lacking today. If necessary, however, Americans could tighten their belts and continue to bear the costs of a *de facto* empire – but it is not necessary. Unlike the situation in 1945, there is no looming transnational communist threat, and U.S. allies are rich and, with few exceptions, capable of taking care of themselves. Yet since the Cold War, American efforts in shaping order abroad have been too strong, embroiling the country in conflicts where the stakes too often proved smaller than their price in blood and treasure. The end of the Cold War made it sensible to scale down American efforts abroad; economic disarray now makes it necessary. Primacy – the sole superpower status that gives the United States more influence on more issues than any other country – provides opportunity; paralysis in resolving its economic problems imposes constraint. Both opportunity and constraint

suggest that grand strategy for the coming decade needs to do several things:

- Confront near-term threats, mainly terrorism. Unless al Qaeda gets weapons of mass destruction (WMD), this is a modest problem relative to historic challenges to national security.
- Conserve primacy by getting over the tendency to squander it on risky projects that are desirable but unnecessary. Use primacy not to seek permanent domination of international politics but instead to manage a transition to a global balance of power.
- Remain intensely and widely engaged in economic, diplomatic and political action abroad, while engaging less often in military action.
- Rely on deterrence, rather than preventive war, to suppress potential military challenges.
- Preserve the building blocks for a renewal of strong military effort in the future, if significant threats to national security (serious conflict with a great power) reemerge.

Limits of Strategy

The logic of any grand strategy depends on the interplay of policy objectives, strategic options, costs of implementation, choices in applying general concepts to particular cases and the amount of risk that policymakers are willing to take. Ambitious objectives raise the risk of blunders and overreach. Cautious strategies minimize risk by limiting objectives but achieve less. There is no consensus at all in the political arena about how much risk policymakers should accept in making choices.

Policymakers also sometimes overlook the difference between objectives and strategy. One is the desired result; the other is the scheme for how to get there. An objective may be legitimate, but whether a strategy is available that will get there at an acceptable cost is a quite separate question. During the Cold War, the objective was containment, and the strategy was deterrence. The stakes for containment were high, so the United States accepted a high price for maintaining deterrence: unprecedented levels of peacetime military spending and deployment, especially in Europe; generous aid to allies; war in Korea; and widespread intelligence operations and covert action. When the cost of pursuing containment in a specific case of marginal importance proved too high, however, as in Vietnam, the objective had to be abandoned, after having already paid a terrible cost.

Pundits or officials who pontificate about strategy usually say much more about what it should aim to achieve than about how to make it work. Strategy is supposed to be a conscious, coherent and consistent plan for deploying resources efficiently to achieve national purposes. This is hard to do in the United States, where strategy is always contested, contradictory or confused – not because of stupidity but because of democracy. The U.S. Constitution is, in effect, anti-strategic: Power is diffused widely, checks and balances frustrate or sidetrack initiatives, legislative and executive authority changes hands frequently, government is often divided, politicians can promote half-baked enthusiasms unconstrained by professional expertise and experts can always be found and mobilized to rationalize any proposal. Objectives are pursued consistently only when a durable consensus about them exists, which leaves policy on many issues stumbling back and forth. Our orderly institutions encourage disorderly policy. The results can be good, but more often through creative muddling than careful strategy.

For three reasons, American grand strategy in the second decade of the 21st century should be based on less ambitious goals than in the past. First, creating a strategy that is complex, subtle and demanding in conception, yet effective in implementation, is seldom practical, so the less that is expected from strategy, the better.

Second, the stakes that should drive strategy, in terms of threats to national security, are (at least for now) much lower than those of the past century. (As terrible as a major attack would be, even with the handful of WMD that a "rogue" state or super-empowered terrorist group might be able to set off within the United States, the worst case hardly compares to the complete destruction of civilization that a World War III between the superpowers could have caused.) Third, competing demands outside the realm of foreign policy make the costs of an activist strategy harder to bear.

Complicated strategies that require persistence and high risk – as well as simple strategies that pursue controversial aims – are likely to founder. Realistic grand strategy should reserve ambitious projects for objectives that command broad political support at home, are worth high costs and can survive unanticipated setbacks.

Material and Moral Interests

Any nation must be concerned with material interests of wealth, power and political security. A nation as rich and powerful as the United States can also afford to pursue moral interests – humanitarian concerns, ideological values and the security of other countries. Moral interests are nice to have. To liberals who believe in a latter-day domino theory, fighting for moral interests may support material interests as well, by containing dangerous developments abroad that might otherwise grow until they reach the United States. Material interests, however, are more clearly "need to have," or what can legitimately be called truly *vital* (in contrast to the common usage, which applies "vital interest" to anything considered important, the strict meaning of vital is "necessary to life"). The two most general need-to-have interests are what has come to be called homeland security (a curiously misleading term) and strategic solvency (the overarching requirement for security over any long span of time).

"Homeland" security now refers to what most countries call *national* security – that is, the direct protection of the nation. Only in a fundamentally secure country like the United States could national security come to be understood as something pursued on fronts far from home. Homeland security, or national security in the strict sense, means immunity to destruction, crippling coercion or economic collapse. Since the Cold War, the only countries that can inflict severe destruction on U.S. territory – the several nuclear powers – have no plausible intent to do so. A new Cold War with China could change this but is not yet inevitable. Smaller powers might have more intent to harm the United States, but North Korea's capability is still small, Iran's is still only potential and Pakistan's nuclear stockpile has still not been hijacked by radicals. This situation, which the United States has enjoyed since the end of the Cold War, is far more secure than any it faced in the half-century after 1940, a half-century in which Americans became accustomed to massive efforts for national security.

In the near future, the only plausible threat of direct attack on U.S. territory comes from al Qaeda, which is what makes counterterrorism (and, especially, keeping WMD out of that organization's hands) the main strategic priority today. This is the area where continuity in grand strategy is most sensible: a high priority on internal security measures, foreign intelligence and special operations abroad that are designed to inflict attrition on terrorists and keep the ones who survive preoccupied with escaping that attrition rather than focusing their energy on engineering big attacks inside the United States. Given the death of Osama bin Laden, the decimation of al Qaeda leadership in drone strikes and other operations and the passage of time without a major attack inside the United States, there is good reason to celebrate the decline of the organization. As long as pieces of the al Qaeda tapeworm survive,

however, and as long as young Muslim men around the world enraged by American actions can be recruited, the organization will not disappear and will keep trying. Weakened as it may be for now, continued pursuit by U.S. forces will remain necessary indefinitely.

The counterterrorism mission is important, but even as the top priority, it is not very costly in the context of the defense budget as a whole. For the most part, this interest requires no change in current grand strategy. The exception would be if failure in the war in Afghanistan were to make it harder to prevent al Qaeda from using that country as a base of operations. In terms of material interests, this is the only reason for persistence in the war against the Taliban. (The moral interest of preventing regression of Afghan society to religious regimentation and oppression of women is another matter.) Whether that war can be won without huge investments of more blood and treasure should become evident soon. If not, grand strategy should include a local fallback strategy for the need-to-have purpose of counterterrorism – that is, a way to keep al Qaeda decimated and on the run without fully controlling the government and territory of Afghanistan. The crucial question is whether that is really possible – whether it is practical to keep getting the intelligence necessary for effective drone strikes, or to pursue and attack al Qaeda units in the region, without having forces operating effectively on the ground.

The second vital interest, strategic solvency, is constant and is ultimately a prerequisite for an effective strategy of any sort. It means keeping external commitments in line with resources to back them. This is always a challenge but is greatest when ambitious foreign policy combines with a straitened economy. The naive conception of strategy is that it must offer the best way to achieve objectives stipulated solely in terms of external interests. If resources to implement an appropriate strategy are not available, however, it is the objectives that must be changed. The defense budget and other spending for foreign affairs cannot be dictated by desirable objectives alone. Today, with the American economy still struggling and no reliable solution to unsustainable expansion of national debt yet in sight, strategic solvency requires significantly reducing the resources allocated to external purposes. The gap between revenues and expenditures cannot be closed by even huge cuts in the defense budget, but it also cannot be closed by modest cuts in domestic spending or modest hikes in taxes. Any resolution is likely to include ample doses of all three painful changes, and when the size of proposed trims in health spending or of increased taxes are argued in comparison to the size of cuts in defense, it will be surprising if defense gets away with keeping as much as 90 percent of its current funding. Even a sensible compromise between the polarized visions of the two parties – a combination of substantial domestic spending cuts and tax increases – would leave a gap that requires cuts in defense spending. The alternatives preferred by the extreme wings of either party would require even larger defense cuts in a truly serious effort to tame the deficit.

The imperative of strategic solvency leaves room for strategies focused on nice-to-have interests where they are cheap, but much less room when they are expensive. These interests include political and economic leverage in other regions to encourage favorable policies in other countries, the spread of liberal democracy to encourage a congenial world order (but not illiberal democracy, which may inflame anti-Americanism), and relief of humanitarian disasters abroad because it is the right thing to do. Costs for pursuing these interests can be kept in balance with benefits where they involve diplomacy, limited covert action or economic aid. Assurance that costs will be acceptable is lowest when the interests are pursued with military force, a blunt instrument with effects that are usually uncertain and sometimes counterproductive.

Principles for American Grand Strategy

Four phrases should describe the contours of American grand strategy in the second half of the 21st century:

Restraint is the Default Option. The mission of American leadership is a mantra among the foreign policy elite, and it should indeed remain a national goal. It is a mistake, however, to equate leadership with imposing U.S. control or ensuring good outcomes on all important issues. Attempts to control generate resentment and resistance, which can often make the price of success higher than the value of the stakes. When the importance of the stakes is not extremely high, and the costs of overcoming resistance are not certain to be low, Washington should not feel compelled to resolve the problem by force, or by other direct and abrasive means. Leaving the locals or intervening regional powers to sort the problem out is one form of restraint. Another is to limit U.S. intervention to unobtrusive or secret initiatives that may push developments in the right direction but can be abandoned at low cost if they do not work. Any assumed humanitarian "responsibility to protect" should be viewed as a multilateral responsibility, and mechanisms should be organized to facilitate rapid multilateral action more effectively than the faulty ad hoc and hesitant attempts of the past.

Soft Primacy. It would make no sense for the United States to throw away its "number one" status in the world, even if it puts a higher premium on prudence, restraint and accommodation. The United States can easily exercise more restraint and still preserve its primacy in international affairs. Although the rise of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) will probably erode the margin of American power over time, the gap that marks unipolarity is so large that American primacy is likely to last for many years. In fact, restraint may safeguard primacy better than activism that causes expensive disappointments and subverts credibility. Credibility comes from the belief abroad that Washington will surely follow through and do what is necessary to win when it commits to action. Thus, credibility can only suffer from overreaching, which is more likely if commitments are frequent and risky.

Primacy should be a cushion for U.S. policy, not a driver. Soft primacy means staying ahead of potential challengers but conserving power for when it is truly needed.

Primacy should be a cushion for U.S. policy, not a driver. Soft primacy means staying ahead of potential challengers but conserving power for when it is truly needed, a stance that is robustly passive much of the time but decisively active in the face of important challenges and opportunities. Because threats to U.S. interests are lower now than they were in the 20th century, or than they may be a dozen years from now, primacy should be exploited most for long-term effect – husbanding resources to fortify the economic base for leadership and using leadership to manage a transition toward a post-primacy global balance of power with major states in other regions. The United States has fought twice as many wars in the two decades since the Cold War as it did in more than twice that time during the Cold War. America now accounts for almost half of all military spending in the world (and well over five times the spending of all its potential enemies combined), and it has more allies than ever before. It could reduce its exertions by a large amount and still remain comfortably number one in the world, prepared to act decisively when truly necessary.

Burden Shifting. American policymakers have long resented free-riding by U.S. allies. Yet they have rarely done more than criticize it, sometimes from the sheer inertia of leadership and sometimes for fear that allies will shirk and necessary action will be left undone. The debt crisis highlights a paradox: With national security spending far higher proportionally than that of its allies, Washington *borrows* heavily in order to play the role of "leader." The United States should off-load more responsibilities for local security onto friendly countries. Some theorists believe that Americans are fated to pay for the "collective goods" of international security because if they do not do it, no one else will.[1] Other countries will naturally shirk, however, as long as they can count on Americans to pick up the slack. International institutions have been good for organizing participation of numerous countries in undertakings such as the Korean War, the first war against Iraq in 1991 and the later wars in the Balkans. Increasing the proportion of effort supplied by other countries, compared with the United States, will be progress. In most cases, other countries have more to gain from solving such security problems because they live closer to them than the United States does. If others refuse to step up and do more of the job, Americans have the right to question whether it is necessary for the United States to do the job for them. Washington should support international institutions in mobilizing multilateral efforts but that should not mean picking up most of the tab.

For the use of force, the example of the NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 is close to a model for soft primacy, if intervention was a good idea in the first place. "Leading from behind" – providing vital intelligence and logistical support while leaving most heavy lifting in combat to the Europeans – worked well. This was a case where limited U.S. action was worthwhile because it could effectively tilt the balance in the conflict at a low price. Encouraging allies to organize and plan for efficient multilateral action in humanitarian crises avoids leaving bad developments abroad to run their course, limits American liability and cost, and promotes the transition toward a balance of power.

Focus on Costs as Much as Benefits. Activists tend to focus on the good things that may be achieved immediately by action, more than on the direct, indirect, delayed and unforeseen costs the action may entail. In a few cases, the price of action is surprisingly low, as in the first war against Iraq in 1991. More often, however, it proves much higher than anticipated, as in Somalia in 1993, Bosnia in 1995, Kosovo in 1999, the second war in Iraq from 2003 to 2010, Afghanistan since 2001 or, prospectively, if hotter heads prevail, Iran. Too often, American presidents have wanted to use force to shape outcomes on the cheap, committing U.S. forces with the expectation that desired results will follow from limited combat. Limited action makes sense, however, only where it can tilt the balance and help one side in the local conflict defeat the other. In a case where American force has to resolve the problem on its own, limitations risk indecisive combat. If the objective is important enough to kill for – which is what the use of military force, as distinct from other policy instruments, is all about – presidents should be willing to use the force as massively as necessary to ensure success rather than bloody stalemate that ultimately costs more lives. If they are going to take the risk of entanglement, they need to accept the potential cost of victory and to count on a higher blood price than optimistic estimates assume. American force should be used less frequently but more decisively. As Carl von Clausewitz wrote, "A short jump is certainly easier than a long one: but no one wanting to get across a wide ditch would begin by jumping half-way."[2]

Near-Term Retrenchment

To confront the opportunities and constraints that the United States is likely to face in the near future,

it should implement a strategy of limited retrenchment. This would mean mainly hollowing out the U.S. military presence in Europe; moving to a reliance on economic, diplomatic and intelligence operations rather than military involvement in the Middle East and South Asia; and revising the scheme for deterrence in Northeast Asia. This shift will not enable all of the ambitious accomplishments that policymakers have sought in recent times, but it is a level of activism in line with properly restrained ambition.

After the Cold War, a large portion of U.S. military forces left Europe. Considering the revolutionary change on the continent, however, it is remarkable that any stayed there. The forces that remain are largely the product of inertia and the dubious notion that without them the U.S. commitment to NATO would be in peril. More than 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, it should finally be clear that apart from small instabilities in Cyprus and the Balkans, *there is no significant security problem in Europe*. Russia has no ideologically aggressive agenda against the West, as the communist metropole in Moscow did after 1945, and is radically diminished in relative power. So even if Moscow's intentions are threatening, it is limited by its drastically weakened capabilities. Even without the United States, the European members of NATO now vastly outclass Russia militarily – indeed, they now include all of the Soviet Union's old European allies and even countries that were once part of the Soviet Union itself – and the United States will remain firmly committed to NATO anyway.

If the United States had not stationed U.S. troops in Europe for so many years during the Cold War, no one would dream of sending any there now. When current military operations staged through Europe can be wound down, U.S. personnel on the continent should be further reduced to the minimum needed to function as caretakers for the infrastructure to be used for reintroducing U.S. forces if needed in the future (whether in Europe itself or other regions). Few if any alliances in history have required stationing troops on allied territory in peacetime, and there is no reason that Washington cannot remain firmly committed to NATO without occupying big chunks of German real estate. NATO should become in effect an alliance in reserve, diplomatically active but militarily primed for reactivation if it again becomes truly needed. NATO involvement in out-of-area contingencies such as Afghanistan is useful, but it has really been a coalition of the willing, not a truly alliance-wide contribution.

As messy as withdrawing from Iraq was, it may prove even harder to withdraw in good order from the war in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, disentangling the United States from the Afghan snake pit is the highest immediate priority and poses questions that may have no truly satisfactory answer. If, after a dozen years of American involvement, there are grounds for hope that the Afghan government can survive and keep the Taliban down, handing over military responsibility to it soon while continuing support to the country's weak economy is the least-bad gamble. Iraq and Afghanistan have been tragic reminders of the limitations of ambitious strategies for reshaping brutal and fractured societies, as well as the ways in which American presence can energize enemies as well as suppress them.

The best way to demobilize nationalist opposition among locals is to get out of their faces. This does not mean forgoing all involvement or leverage, but using less socially disruptive means. Although the United States cannot leave immediately, Washington should declare that it does not want permanent bases in Muslim countries (bases that are an affront to local nationalists and thus contribute to the anti-Americanism they are meant to combat) and should move as expeditiously as feasible to a primary reliance on offshore assets for firepower and technical intelligence collection. This will not defuse all local anger about American behavior, but it will not hurt.

The only reason to want U.S. military presence to be permanent is if a *de facto* American empire is to be permanent, and Americans should have no interest in validating that image.

If it is not already too late, strategy should back away from the hysteria over Iran's prospective acquisition of nuclear weapons and rely on deterrence rather than preventive war to handle the threat. It will certainly be a bad thing if Iran gets the bomb, but it is ridiculous to consider a nuclear Iran intolerable on grounds that it will be too irrational to be deterred while accepting a much wilder and crazier nuclear North Korea. Also, if either Pyongyang or Tehran is rational and not suicidal, there is even less doubt that the time-honored alternative of deterrence is safer than the frequently discredited alternative of preventive war. Washington should adopt the same threat of retaliation against Tehran as it did against Moscow and Beijing for more than 40 years.[3] If it is not already too late, Washington should also make clear to allies who depend on American support that they must not start wars that are likely to drag in the United States or worsen the already-terrible U.S. standing in the Muslim world. American grand strategy should serve American policy and make material aid to allies, Israel included, conditional on conformity to that policy.

Deterrence is not a sure thing – no one can ever be certain that it will prevent disaster – but the case for choosing it rests on how it compares with the alternative. The consequences of preventive war against Iraq in 2003 should be a caution against that strategy, and the consequences of holding back from preventive war against Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao's China – both seen at the time as every bit as dangerous as Iran seems today – should be a reassurance about deterrence. Some dangerous problems in international politics do not have any low-risk solutions. Iran with nuclear weapons would pose a very disturbing risk, but less risk than a war to hold it off.

Only invasion and occupation could definitely prevent Iranian nuclear weapons, and that strategic option is out of the question. (Iran has far more than twice the population of Iraq, where the U.S. Army was stretched to the breaking point, and an invasion would undermine popular Iranian opposition to the current regime. With U.S. forces barely out of Iraq and still bogged down in Afghanistan, there is no public support for any other such venture, let alone one on a much larger scale.) Air attack alone – the option considered more seriously than invasion – would delay, rather than eliminate, Iranian nuclear capability, but it would drastically inflame intent to do dangerous things with the capability when it is attained. Grand strategy must plan beyond tomorrow and weigh effects not only on adversaries' capabilities but also on their incentives.

Iran with nuclear weapons would pose a very disturbing risk, but less risk than a war to hold it off. Only invasion and occupation could definitely prevent Iranian nuclear weapons, and that strategic option is out of the question.

To minimize destabilizing effects, retrenchment must proceed on careful and inconsistent conditions – inconsistency determined by the circumstances of specific cases. More than 30 years ago, when Jimmy Carter temporarily planned to withdraw U.S. ground forces from South Korea

and leave American airpower as the initial line of defense in the event of war, it was a thoroughly bad idea. It is now a bad idea whose time has come. South Korea is now astronomically richer than North Korea, yet spends only half as much of its gross domestic product as the United States does on defense. Reducing the U.S. profile on the peninsula would pose risks, but manageable ones. Engineered in a careful way that keeps clear the continuing U.S. commitment to fight in the event of a North Korean attack and to provide nuclear deterrence against the new nuclear capability of an otherwise militarily threadbare adversary, taking ground forces out of South Korea would tighten American defense spending over time (though not immediately), defuse anti-American sentiment among the younger generation in South Korea (which may otherwise corrode the base of the alliance) and signal the maturity of South Korea as an allied middle power. Japan, in turn, should have full responsibility for military defense of its own territory, but no more, despite its comparatively low military burden. To push Japanese involvement in wider regional security to a level commensurate with its wealth would not be worth the potential costs to wider regional stability, given the enduring suspicion and fear of Japan in many Asian countries. To maintain a local U.S. deterrent against North Korea, and to keep Japan's military profile constrained, the U.S. military presence in Japan continues to be a good thing.

Long-Term Reassertion

It has been an American conceit to assume that the world cannot get along without forceful American direction after the Cold War. The United States can be fully involved without fully controlling international relations. Unipolarity has provided a holiday of sorts from traditionally big security threats. American grand strategy should draw strength from that holiday to limit effort in the immediate future, when it is less necessary; to husband resources; and to maintain the groundwork for stronger efforts later if things go wrong on a grander scale. This means a move toward a mobilization strategy for military power and to focus on China as a potential hostile superpower.

Limited retrenchment does not mean isolationism, complacency, impotence or reversion to the unreadiness for conflict that characterized American policy in peacetime for the nation's first century and a half. At the level of grand strategy, "mobilization strategy" does not mean greater reliance on military reserve forces for handling contingencies (a change that already occurred in the late 20th century). Instead, it means scaling down standing forces (while keeping most of the smaller force combat ready) in favor of concentrating on organization, plans and investments that provide a robust base for rapid remobilization of larger deployable forces at a point in the future when the benign security environment goes bad. This means a solidly designed system of readiness to get ready, with more proportional emphasis on maintaining "seed corn" in various forms. For weapons technology, this would mean concentrating on research and development, design, testing and experimentation with prototypes more than serial production of new weapons, as well as investment in standby facilities and production capabilities that can be reactivated rather than built from scratch when the need for large standing forces grows. For personnel, it would mean focusing on professional training and advanced schooling to develop cadres, staffs and skeletal organizations more than fully fleshed-out units. To prepare for expansion when necessary, it would mean investing in overhead, keeping well-maintained mothball facilities and doing elaborate planning exercises.[4]

China is on everyone's minds, from optimists who see mutually beneficial trade relations and political liberalization as likely to pessimists who fear its growing power. The issue will not be forced as long as China sees itself as still far behind the United States and running to catch up.

A new Sino-American Cold War is by no means inevitable, and grand strategy should emphasize diplomatic options to avert it. If China's stunning economic development and political stability go off the rails, which could easily happen, the prospective challenge may go away. But if not? When a rising power begins to overtake a once-dominant power, peace is not the default option. American grand strategy so far has been hedging in both directions, but the development of Chinese power may force it to a fork in the road before long, choosing either the prong toward promoting cooperation at the price of accommodation, if not appeasement, or the prong toward facing conflict with containment and deterrence.

If peace is the overriding imperative, by the time China becomes a superpower, Washington will have to recognize its claim to equal prerogatives in regulating the Asian regional security system and hold back from interfering in the resolution of the Chinese civil war (that is, the status of Taiwan). Optimists hope to have it both ways: a full-grown powerful China still as willing as ever to subordinate its aims to those of the United States. This would require Chinese who are by then rich and successful to be more gentle, modest and deferential than Americans and less confident, self-righteous and aspiring. Why expect such a difference?

If maintaining American dominance in Asia is the priority, however, planning for a new Cold War is in order. In that case, it makes sense to reformalize a defense commitment to Taipei, lest ambiguity allow Beijing to miscalculate the odds of American intervention in a cross-straits war, as casual U.S. signals encouraged miscalculations by Kim Il-Sung in 1950 and Saddam Hussein in 1990. If domestic political cross-pressures preclude decisive strategic commitment to either accommodation or confrontation, a reasonable compromise would be to declare that the United States would supply arms to Taiwan but not intervene directly in combat. Refraining from any of these difficult choices until they are unavoidable – when a crisis suddenly thrusts the worst possibilities onto the table – is politically likely but would be a dangerous abrogation of strategy.

Instruments

Diplomacy is a constant and pervasive medium for promoting most aspects of policy. Four main sets of tools back up diplomacy and enable strategies: military force, covert action, economic assistance and public relations. The latter three should logically play a stronger role if the first, force, is to recede, but they have their own limitations. In the past, covert action has been controversial and often embarrassing when it involved manipulating other countries' internal politics. Intense pressure to reduce spending casts doubt on the availability of economic aid, and advertising or public relations reeks of propaganda. What recommends these tools are the alternatives by default: either continued military overstretch or practical strategic disengagement.

Covert action is least controversial where it is most needed: for counterterrorism or to short-circuit nuclear proliferation. Both moral uncertainties and a healthy respect for the barriers to success in attempts to control who gets power in other countries should make covert political intervention rare, and taboo in genuine liberal democracies. In some cases, however, it is the only alternative – a less destructive one – to either doing nothing or sending the Marines. For instance, was it really better for the United States to invade Panama at the end of 1989, smashing up the capital and killing hundreds of people, than to aid the coup attempt by Panamanian National Guard officers against Noriega earlier that year which failed, perhaps for lack of covert U.S. assistance?

It will require a miracle of domestic political strategy to increase, or even hold steady, the amount of money available for foreign aid, which is generally seen as charity. The best way to make the case is to: 1. call aid a national security investment,

2. show how much less even increased aid would be than the amount most Americans mistakenly believe it is,[5] and 3. present it as a cheaper way to seek American influence than spending far larger amounts for military intervention. For example, aid supported the recovery of the most important American allies after World War II, supported struggling societies in the Third World during the Cold War (and reduced their incentives to try Marxism as an alternative) and secured the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt and sustained it for more than 30 years.

Educating foreign publics about American policy and Western values is no guarantee of strategic leverage. Many foreigners hate the United States not out of ignorance but because they know what the United States does and detest it. On balance, however, promoting exchange programs and disseminating information about the United States and its policies as widely and effectively as possible will not hurt. It is especially tragic that critics succeeded in abolishing the U.S. Information Agency just before it was most needed; recreating a heftier organizational home for this function would help.

All this said, sometimes there will be no good substitute for force. It may not even always be the last resort, although it should be close to it. The main thing for the makers of grand strategy to grasp – because they are increasingly civilians with scant military experience – is how blunt an instrument force usually is, even in the age of precision weapons and 21st century information technology. Major projects to shape world order should be undertaken when necessary for truly vital interests, or in lesser cases, when there are firm grounds for expecting the costs to be far lower than the benefits – not just when the objective is desirable in itself.

Conclusion

The United States needs to have a grand strategy to counter threats to security. At present, this can be done – if security is properly conceived – at a lower cost than the nation became accustomed to in the first two decades after the Cold War. In the longer term, however, security may require stronger efforts. Strategy should husband resources for that more demanding future. It would also be nice for the United States to have a grand strategy that improves governance in benighted countries, but "nice to have" means undertaking such projects only where benefits are likely to be high and costs low. The estimates should depend on cautious, rather than hopeful, assumptions. The only thing worse than not doing enough for world order is for the United States to try to do more than it is willing to follow through on if the going gets tough.

ENDNOTES

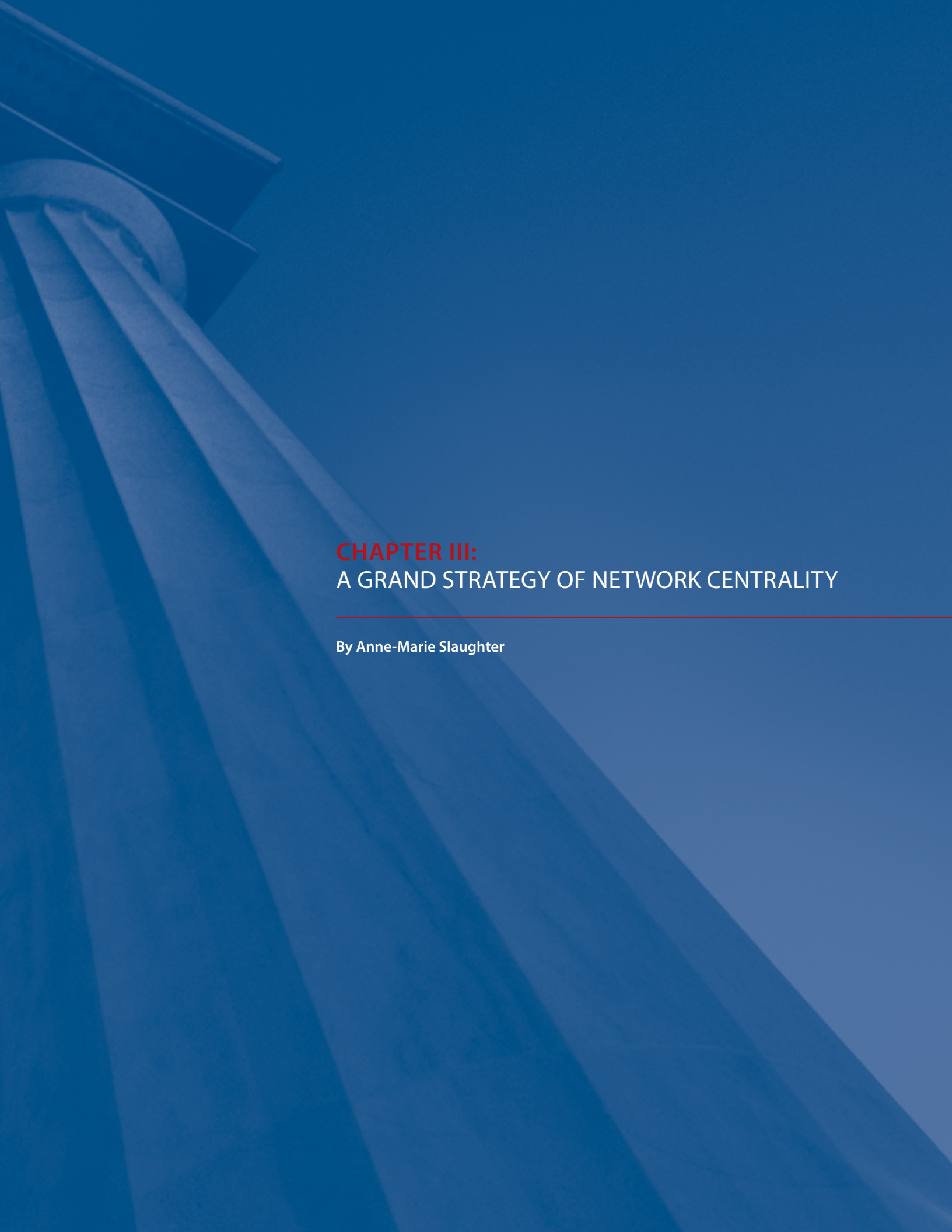
1. For example, see G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

2. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 598. This and other themes in this paper are elaborated in Richard K. Betts, *American Force: Dangers, Delusions, and Dilemmas in National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

3. Some analysts fear a cascade of nuclear proliferation in the region if Iran gets the bomb. This risk cannot be denied, although such a danger has been predicted periodically for decades, each time a new entrant to the nuclear club appeared. President Kennedy gave a famous speech speculating about the danger of more than 20 nuclear powers in the 1970s. Nor can it be certain that attacking Iran will dissuade rather than provoke other countries to seek a deterrent of their own. The war to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction did not turn Iran away from seeking a nuclear option.

4. For a more detailed discussion of mobilization strategy, see Richard K. Betts, *Military Readiness: Concepts, Choices, Consequences* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1995), Chapter 8.

5. Surveys have long shown that the public vastly overestimates the amount of foreign aid given by the United States. See for example Steven Kull and I. M. Destler, *Misreading the Public* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1999), 123-128. More recently, a November 2010 poll conducted by World Public Opinion asked respondents to estimate the percentage of the federal budget that goes to foreign aid, and the median response was 25 percent. When asked what would be an appropriate percentage of the federal budget to go to foreign aid, the median response was 10 percent. The actual percentage is 1 percent. See "American Public Opinion on Foreign Aid," WorldPublicOpinion.org, November 30, 2010, http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/nov10/ForeignAid_Nov10_quaire.pdf; and President Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on Fiscal Policy" (George Washington University, Washington, April 13, 2011), http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/13/remarks-president-fiscal-policy.



CHAPTER III:
A GRAND STRATEGY OF NETWORK CENTRALITY

By Anne-Marie Slaughter

America's Path

Grand Strategy for the Next Administration

A GRAND STRATEGY OF NETWORK CENTRALITY

By Anne-Marie Slaughter

For the next decade, the United States should pursue a grand strategy of network centrality. The most important shift for America is not the rise of China and the realignment of power in the international system, but rather the ubiquity and density of global networks. Existing grand strategies – such as primacy, containment, offshore balancing, isolationism, selective engagement and order building – assume a world of states acting essentially as unitary actors with defined military, economic and diplomatic strategies. States certainly continue to exist and to play essential roles in the international system. However, even if they are the principal actors in the international system, they now act side by side with many types of social actors who are able to come together and act independently on the world stage. The resulting system is messy, complex and frustrating. Yet wishing for a simpler world will not make it so.

A grand strategy for the 21st century must orient and adapt U.S. policy to the realities of 21st-century life. It must operate simultaneously in the world of states and the world of society. Crafting such a strategy requires a paradigm shift in how both worlds are seen and analyzed. The lens most frequently applied to the world of states sees various configurations of power: a unipolar, bipolar or multipolar world, or a world of rising and declining powers. The lens most frequently applied to social actors – corporations (both licit and illicit), banks and other financial institutions, institutionalized and independent media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches, philanthropies, terrorists, criminal traffickers in illegal goods of all kinds, universities, and social and political movements – focuses on the power and influence that they exercise on governments rather than seeing them as autonomous players in global politics.

Strategists must instead look at all of these actors as participants in an ever-shifting landscape of networks. Some of those networks are limited to

unitary states; others involve individual government officials working with their counterparts abroad. Some mix government officials with civic and corporate actors; others are composed solely of corporations, NGOs or criminals. Still others mix different social actors, civic and corporate, without government participation. These networks are growing in number, density and global reach. They are the way in which individuals and institutions increasingly communicate, produce value, consume, collaborate, compete, fight, organize, express themselves, lead and follow. The Internet is the most obvious example, but it is only one, as new technologies enable physical as well as virtual networks.

In such a world, strategists should analyze states as the principal hubs of intersecting regional and global networks instead of as poles in a unipolar, bipolar or multipolar system. A state's ability to position itself as close to the center of critical networks as possible and to mobilize, orchestrate and create networks will prove a vital source of power. The United States should thus strive to be the most central node – the supernode – in the networks that are most important to advancing its interests and that are most connected to other networks.

Such positioning does not mean that the United States should be a part of every network that other countries, even important countries, create and participate in. Nor does it mean that the United States should necessarily be the central actor in network actions; leading in networks often requires connecting disparate actors with resources and creating the conditions and coalitions for others to act. The biggest challenge in implementing a grand strategy of network centrality is choosing which networks to be part of, knowing how to advance U.S. interests within them and developing the capacity to create and foster networks that can develop and implement innovative solutions to global problems without direct U.S. participation.

Formulating and implementing this strategy involves a series of steps. First is to master network thinking: to see problems in terms of the connections between the relevant actors and, hence, to see the relevant choke points, switches and sources of influence. The second step is to master the tools of gathering intelligence about relevant networks and mapping them in real time. Third is to build the key relationships that will allow U.S. officials and their allies to use pressure or persuasion at the relevant points in the network. Fourth is to learn which kinds of networks work for which affirmative purposes – from avoiding and controlling pandemics to mobilizing public-private partnerships in the service of development objectives – and to create the official infrastructure to host and foster those networks. The fifth and final step is to understand how to provide platforms that will encourage and enable U.S. citizens, corporations, organizations and institutions of all kinds to organize themselves effectively to produce and implement solutions to problems that concern them.

Advancing U.S. Interests through Network Centrality

The initial step in developing any grand strategy is to identify vital national interests that the strategy must protect and advance. In my view, the Obama National Security Strategy correctly lists four enduring U.S. national interests: [1]

- The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners.
- A strong, innovative and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity.
- Respect for universal values at home and around the world.
- An international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

All national security strategies include a version of the first two interests. With respect to universal values, administrations vary in how they describe U.S. support for such values. The first Clinton administration, for instance, adopted an explicit strategy of "enlarging" the circle of democracies.[2] The George W. Bush administration proclaimed a strategy of building "a balance of power that favors human freedom."[3] By contrast, the Obama administration speaks of "respect" for universal values as a core U.S. national interest; working to ensure respect for those values around the world is a more low-key approach designed to avoid the backlash against those values that can be engendered by aggressive democracy promotion, especially by force. Still, all national security strategies over the past two decades have assumed that the spread of universal values is not only normatively desirable as a matter of human freedom and dignity but also instrumentally important for U.S. security. They assume that a world in which every human being is free to speak and worship and free from fear and want would be a much safer and more prosperous world, and a better place for Americans.

The Obama administration also departs from its most recent predecessor in listing an "international order advanced by U.S. leadership" as a core national interest. Contrast this with Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy, which spoke of "developing agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power."[4] This was a reference to the widely publicized and, for some, highly controversial strategy of relying on "coalitions of the willing" rather than working through formal international organizations. The Obama strategy does not necessarily privilege formal over informal international organizations, but its designation of an "international order" reflects a commitment to a rules-based international system for advancing U.S. interests, accepting that the rules must apply to the United States as well as everyone else. A core premise of the Obama strategy, building on the concluding section of the Bush 2006 strategy,[5] is that the United States and the world face collective action problems that can only be resolved by agreeing to and complying with common rules, and by working through common institutions.

All of the national security strategies of the 21st century assume deep global interdependence – that is, dense and complex connections among nations, such that large or small events halfway around the world can have immediate and important effects on the United States. Conversely, the United States cannot defend its citizens and advance its interests simply by adopting policies and regulating actors within its own territory. It must ensure not only the security of its territory and its citizens but also that of its allies and partners because an attack on them will ultimately harm Americans as well. U.S. prosperity is tied to an open and growing international economic system; the interdependence of the global economy was demonstrated beyond doubt during the financial crisis of 2008. On the positive side, open trading and strong demand for U.S. goods and services in the countries that contain the majority of the world's population are the best guarantee of continued U.S. prosperity.

As Peter Feaver observes in this volume, U.S. national security strategies since the Cold War evince more continuity than change. Feaver's version of the "legacy strategy" is based on four pillars: maintaining defense spending at high enough levels to deter any would-be rivals; promoting the spread of democracy; promoting globalization, market capitalism and free trade; and identifying and confronting the threat of the spread of nuclear weapons to rogue states and terrorist networks. One of the difficulties of crafting grand strategy, however, is specifying the appropriate level of generality in stating ends and means. Each of these pillars is a means of achieving what Feaver identifies as the overarching strategic goal of preserving and extending the existing global order. From my perspective, however, each of his pillars can be

recast as a vital national interest. The question that a grand strategy must answer is *how* to achieve those interests at the more operational level. For instance, does the United States seek to contain or to roll back communism? Does it choose to act unilaterally or multilaterally as a first resort? Those are the kinds of overarching strategic choices that differentiate one grand strategy from another.

In making those choices, it is critical to recognize that the U.S. government will face constrained resources at least for the next decade. That means making the most of what it has and generating assets and resources that allow the government to put in a little to leverage a lot. Richard Betts' concept of "strategic solvency," meaning that external commitments must be kept in line with strategic resources to back them, is useful in this regard.

Advancing the Security of the United States and Its Citizens, Allies and Partners through Network Centrality

The United States has embraced network centrality in the military realm, at least rhetorically. In the run-up to the Chicago NATO Summit, Deputy National Security Adviser Benjamin Rhodes observed that the United States "will join with many non-NATO countries to build new partnerships – so that NATO is truly the hub of a global security network."[6] Rhodes was articulating a core aspect of the new NATO strategic concept. In a 2010 speech, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that NATO "should become a hub of a network of security partnerships and a centre for consultation on global security issues" – a "globally connected institution."[7] As the pre-eminent military power in NATO, the United States would be at the center of this global security network. It and other NATO members could choose different partners according to the task at hand. Furthermore, the United States could steadily expand its network of security partners as different countries build their military capabilities and want to join.

In terms of how the United States actually fights, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey has argued that "where we're headed is a global networked approach to war."[8] Dempsey is referring to his view that "the military instrument should never be wielded alone,"[9] but rather together with diplomatic and development tools. This is a way of thinking about conflict in terms of a web of social, economic, political and military causes that need to be addressed by a constellation of linked social, economic, political and military instruments.

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On the battlefield itself, networked warfare as a U.S. military doctrine is now over a decade old. Robust networks give a fighting force an information advantage, flattening hierarchies and connecting command-and-control systems to warfighters in ways that improve situational awareness and increase collaboration and synchronization. When applied to an enemy, however, network centrality requires mapping opposing forces as graphs of links and nodes, identifying lines of communication and supply chains as points of maximum vulnerability.

Knocking out central nodes in enemy networks will be at least as important as killing frontline or guerilla enemy troops, not only in counterinsurgency operations but also in counterterrorism, cyber warfare and special forces operations. Of course, U.S. reliance on networks also creates new vulnerabilities to cyberattack and antisatellite attack, which necessitate developing new networks to protect existing ones.

U.S. military planning reflects these networked perspectives. The Defense Strategic Guidance released by President Obama in January 2012 assumes that long-term stability operations on the model of Iraq or even Afghanistan, in which large numbers of U.S. troops are deployed over a period of years, will become increasingly rare.[10] The wars of the 21st century involving great powers are much more likely to be fought by special forces who are specialized in combat against pirates, terrorists and global criminal networks; in focused search-and-rescue and search-and-destroy missions; and in civilian protection units that can disable but not destroy an enemy. They will be fought by cyberwarriors, skilled in manipulating unmanned weapons and in deterring and responding to system-wide cyberattacks. And they will be fought in multilateral coalitions aimed at stopping the wars that criminal governments wage against their own people and bringing individual leaders and their coteries of high-level supporters to justice. The ability to project military force and to fight a sustained land, sea and air war remains vital, but it is increasingly a deterrent more than an offensive tool.

Still, a full appreciation of network centrality as a grand strategy would lead the U.S. defense establishment to focus more on understanding conflicts as complex adaptive systems. Neil Johnson, a physicist and complexity theorist, argues that each modern conflict "is an evolving ecology with various armed insurgent groups, terrorists, paramilitaries, and the army … many interacting species which are continually taking decisions based on the previous actions of others."[11] These systems can be modeled and countered using network theory. Moreover, ecosystems can only survive when they "are being continually fed by an underlying supply network whose 'nutrients' involve mercenaries, arms, money, drug-trafficking and kidnappings."[12]

Cutting off these nutrients is a highly effective way of winning a conflict, or at least changing the balance of forces. In the battle against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in states such as North Korea and Iran, the most effective measures that the United States has adopted to date involve the mapping and freezing of vital financial networks. In the case of North Korea, the United States traced the financial paths by which North Korean leaders were financing their lavish lifestyles and, in 2005, imposed sanctions on Banco Delta Asia in Macau by forbidding U.S. companies and financial institutions to do business with it. That move triggered the freezing of the accounts of several North Korean companies, which could then no longer pay for the flow of luxuries to regime leaders. The North Korean government reacted swiftly, agreeing to stop operations at a major nuclear facility in return for a lifting of the sanctions. The United States failed to appreciate the difficulties of quickly releasing North Korean funds, which led to another break-off of the Six-Party Talks, but Banco Delta Asia proved its value.[13]

Five years later, the United States has managed to impose the toughest sanctions ever on Iran by again leveraging its central place in global financial networks. In February 2012, the United States government froze all the assets held in the U.S. by Iranian official institutions, including the Iranian Central Bank and, critically, put the financial institutions of other countries on notice that they could be penalized in the United States for dealing with the Iranian Central Bank. A month later, the European Union (EU) passed a law requiring

the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) to disconnect 25 Iranian banks, including the Iranian Central Bank, from its global financial-messaging network. Although other global services exist for wiring funds, SWIFT is one of the most important and most widely used; hence, disconnection is the equivalent of denial of access to global financial networks. Both of these moves have ratcheted up pressure on the Iranian government to an unprecedented degree that appears to be bringing Iran back to the nuclear negotiating table.

What these moves have in common is a recognition of, and reliance on, the value of network centrality. As the largest financial market in the world, the United States can pressure any country by pressuring that country's trading partners. That is network logic, which works as long as the United States maintains its central position. Indeed, the EU took action against the Iranian banks in the shadow of pressure from the U.S. Treasury and pending legislation by the U.S. Congress. When the United States and the EU act together, their network centrality advantage is overwhelming.

NATO can also build relationships with different regional institutions. It is a regional organization itself under Article 52 of the U.N. Charter. As other regional organizations – such as the EU, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of American States and even the East Asian Summit – become willing to authorize the use of military force by member states for agreed multilateral purposes, the North Atlantic Council (which functions as the political arm of NATO) can become the center of a network of networks.

Finally, the military dimension of a grand strategy of network centrality would put resources not only into making the United States the hub of a global security network but also into making NATO the hub of a global network of regional organizations with the military capabilities to take direct action in their regions. The U.N. Charter actually envisaged such a system in Chapter VIII, which includes three articles governing "regional arrangements," encourages the peaceful settlement of disputes through regional organizations and requires Security Council approval for the use of force by a regional organization unless it is acting in collective self-defense. Network centrality would argue for building, strengthening and linking the organizations listed above as well as other smaller organizations. Recall that NATO can become more central in this network simply by increasing the connections of each of these organizations to one another.

Advancing a Strong, Innovative and Growing U.S. Economy in an Open International Economy through Network Centrality

Corporations moved to the networked world a decade ago. The management literature of the late 1990s was full of the shift from hierarchies to networks. Supply chains first shifted from vertical to horizontal, in-house to global. Then, they moved from chains of contracted suppliers to networks of peer producers. Boeing refers to its global "value webs," an approach that turns managers into systems integrators.[14] Large manufacturing companies assemble networks of designers and producers; they look for "network orchestrators." Moreover, as many companies begin outsourcing at least parts of their research and development, they are creating space for professional "inventers" operating through websites like InnoCentive, which allows anyone to post a challenge to an online community of experts who can collaborate on a solution.[15]

A grand strategy of network centrality would focus on how to harness the centrality of U.S. corporations in global economic networks in ways that increase U.S. prosperity. In terms of positive economic strategy, the United States must pay far more attention to where its corporations and

individual citizens are located in global trade, manufacturing and services networks. A growing number of U.S.-incorporated corporations, such as Visa and Nike, now describe themselves not as U.S. corporations but as global corporations, emphasizing that although they are headquartered in the United States, they employ tens of thousands of people around the world. If we think of the headquarters as the most connected node in a dense web of circulating goods and services, then how can the U.S. economy benefit from that centrality? Is it legitimate to insist that some percentage of those goods and services originate in the United States? Can the U.S. government levy a "centrality premium" that allows the corporation to decide how it can meet its quota most efficiently but nevertheless recompenses U.S. taxpayers for the benefits that the corporation receives from being part of a supernode?

Promoting network centrality would not only mean harvesting some part of the benefits flowing from businesses that are already globally connected but also doing everything possible to help smaller U.S. businesses *get* globally connected. Obama's National Export Initiative focuses on increasing export credits and providing information and training to make it as easy as possible for small and medium-sized enterprises to sell abroad or to expand from one market into another.[16] Yet it overlooks the importance of human networks, the ways Americans are already connected to friends, family and community members abroad.

The U.S. media regularly reports on the increasing number of foreign students who graduate from Ph.D. and professional programs in the United States but then return to their home countries to get jobs and build businesses rather than staying on to work in the United States. For instance, a 2008 Duke study of 1,224 foreign students found that only 10 percent of Indian students, 6 percent of Chinese students, and 15 percent of European students wanted to stay permanently in the United States following graduation.[17] Similarly, many of the most talented children born or raised in the United States in immigrant families are now returning to their parents' home countries to be a part of booming economies there.[18] The tone of all these articles is gloomy, interpreting these trends as further tokens of U.S. decline. Consider, however, China's strategy, which has always been to encourage Chinese merchants to set up shop overseas and to encourage and welcome their investment back in the mainland. Indeed, the Chinese government sends officials to cities in the United States as unlikely as Atlanta specifically to support overseas Chinese who want to invest back in China.

In terms of positive economic strategy, the United States must pay far more attention to where its corporations and individual citizens are located in global trade, manufacturing and services networks.

A strategy of network centrality would welcome students who come to the United States and then go back to their home countries and would encourage them to take a network of American friends and contacts with them. These are the threads that weave the webs of economic, financial, political and social relations that define globalization. No one among the technologically elite in the 21st century will be connected to only one country. The United States takes its central position in all of the webs for granted; indeed, many people who

ought to know better in the United States (starting in Washington) are still inclined to think of global networks in terms of hub-and-spoke formations, with the United States at the hub. Increasingly, however, new business and financial relationships bypass the United States. Young Brazilian entrepreneurs can cut deals directly with their Asian, Arab, European or African counterparts; young Chinese or Indians have all of Asia in their backyard, stretching all the way to Europe; and African trade and business ties often follow immigration routes to Europe or the Middle East. Mindful of these new patterns, the U.S. government should encourage American cities and academic hubs to follow in the footsteps of Boston Mayor Thomas Menino. He is creating the equivalent of high-class dorms for young entrepreneurs coming out of Boston's many colleges and universities. The aim is to encourage them to stay in Boston and network with one another while pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams for at least a few years after they graduate.[19]

Advancing Respect for Universal Values at Home and Around the World through Network Centrality

From a global network perspective, the best way to promote respect for universal values around the world is first to live up to them at home. If the United States is indeed the supernode, then all other states and societies are directly affected by what it does. The power of its example is amplified by the power of its connectedness.

Beyond getting it right at home, the U.S. government should focus far more on the networked ways in which democracy and human rights do in fact spread from country to country. Two approaches, one led by civil society and the other by the U.S. and Brazilian governments, show the way.

In her book *Join the Club*, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author Tina Rosenberg documents the many ways that "the social cure" – the use of small groups and peer pressure to change behavior – can address political, economic and educational problems around the world.[20] Her model is the replication of hugely successful groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, in which a group can be started by anyone according to a basic template but the movement as a whole is networked and supported by a central platform.

Of particular relevance is Rosenberg's research on how a group of Serbian youth activists named *Otpor* managed to develop an entire set of techniques that succeeded in mobilizing first Serbian youth and then large swathes of Serbian society to oust Slobodan Milosevic in 2000. Initially funded by the Open Society Institute, George Soros' foundation, and later by various branches of the National Endowment for Democracy, it delivered far greater value for money than many other more expensive investments in democracy in the Balkans. After Milosevic was gone, the group created the Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), which has run workshops for similar groups of youth activists all over the world, including Zimbabwe, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran and Burma. Many of the techniques were widely copied in the Egyptian revolution, and the networks it is building are wide and deep.

This is a relatively low-cost way to build indigenous support and capability to stand up for democracy and human rights, one that assumes and builds on the value of viral network transmission. The United States has been, and will continue to be, a central hub for the transmission of expertise, funding and political support for pro-democracy movements through government-funded organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy and NGOs like Freedom House. Critically, however, a network centrality approach also makes it clear that the United States can do enormous good by building up a non-U.S. organization like CANVAS that is itself densely connected to democracy movements in other countries.

On the government side, the Obama administration has joined with Brazil to cosponsor the Open Government Partnership, bringing together 55 governments committed to increasing transparency, accountability and citizen participation. The choice of Brazil as a co-founder was important; compared with the United States, Brazil is much more closely connected to many countries in the developing world and has different sources of legitimacy and influence. Members of the partnership come together and develop individual national action plans outlining concrete steps that they will take to make their governments more open, accountable and participatory. They commit to open reporting on their progress and the exchange of best practices as to what has worked and what has not.[21] The mechanism for holding members to their commitments and getting things done is nothing other than high-level peer pressure.

Advancing a Strong and Effective International Order that Promotes Peace, Security and Opportunity through Network Centrality

The United States has pursued a network centrality strategy to building international order by creating informal networks and initiatives; joining and strengthening regional organizations in the trans-Atlantic, Asia-Pacific and Americas regions; and working for the reform of post-World War II international organizations to prevent rising powers from "forking off" and creating their own institutions.

One value of informal organizations is that they can both get things done quickly and ensure that the United States continues to play a central role within them. That characterization does not apply to the coalition of the willing in Iraq, which was created largely as a way of circumventing the United Nations. However, initiatives like the Proliferation Security Initiative fit this bill,[22] as do the more recent Global Counterterrorism Forum[23] created under the Obama administration and the creation of the G-20 following the global financial crisis. For these organizations to maintain international legitimacy and influence, they must be joined up as closely as possible with formal organizations. The G-20 has much more impact if it is directly connected to the larger membership and formal procedures of the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and other existing organizations; this insight supports the administration's efforts to task those organizations with G-20 tasks rather than creating an independent G-20 secretariat.

At the same time, the Obama administration has focused intensely on regional organizations, understanding that the scope for old-fashioned great-power diplomacy is increasingly limited. It is the states of the region that have to live with both a conflict and its resolution. In this context, the United States has joined certain regional organizations (such as the East Asia Summit) to expand and strengthen them; has worked closely with other regional organizations (such as the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council) that are willing to exercise more active responsibility for regional peace and order; has strongly supported action by regional organizations in Africa (principally the African Union and ECOWAS); and has re-engaged with the relevant regional organizations in other areas (such as the Arctic Council). The United States can work closely with these organizations as a central diplomatic player outside the region, or it can work through NATO to build a coalition of regional organizations focused on a specific issue.

Informal networks of governments and regional organizations aim to address crises and resolve festering problems and conflicts between states. However, U.S. foreign policy must also increasingly focus on solving global problems arising from things such as climate change, infectious disease, water security, food security, resource scarcity, corruption and weak governance, failing

states, global criminal networks and the oppression of women. These problems are the purview of the functional bureaus of the State Department, which are steadily expanding, yet they also end up on the desks of the regional bureaus and, of course, individual embassies.

The most effective strategy for addressing transnational or global problems involves mixed networks of public, private and civic actors created under the rubric of public-private partnerships (PPPs), global alliances, global campaigns or collaborative networks. Although not a panacea, such arrangements can stretch scarce government resources and ensure that they leverage other contributions of money, expertise and other in-kind resources. The initial emphasis on PPPs came from the Reinventing Government initiative under the Clinton administration, but the George W. Bush administration was also enthusiastic. From the perspective of strategic solvency, PPPs are a smart way to go.

Equally important is the effectiveness argument. These alliances are very good at taking advantage of local knowledge in developing countries and at pooling and learning from the experience of many diverse actors. The energy, innovation and capacity in the private sector, both corporate and civic, are a vital foreign policy resource.

Once again, a strategy of network centrality does not mean that the U.S. government has to be a central player in these types of networks. Often it is equally important to help bring the network into being and then play a supporting role or step back altogether. The art of governing – that is, problem solving – by networks involves knowing how to do three key things: identify the relevant players in a particular geographic or subject area, convene and connect them, and structure a network or a coalition so that interests are aligned. Stephen Goldsmith, the former Indianapolis mayor, and William D. Eggers have documented many examples in domestic U.S. politics of enterprising government officials bringing together actors from the private, civic and government sectors to create partnerships, networks and collaborative alliances. National Park Service Superintendent Brian O'Neill is one of the leading practitioners of this approach. "It's an entirely different role for public employees," he says. "Rather than see themselves as doers, we try to get our people to see themselves as facilitators, conveners, and brokers of how to engage the community's talents to get our work accomplished."[24] Imagine transposing that approach to foreign policy, to the countless different communities of myriad types in a host of places that the United States touches in some way.

Governments will be in the business of negotiating agreements, resolving crises and solving problems with one another for a long time to come, but top-down efforts cannot stimulate the widespread behavioral change that is required to address social and economic challenges. Those changes are most effectively motivated from the bottom up. Thus, PPPs are going to be an ever-more-useful tool in the foreign policy toolbox. And they are an area in which the United States is very well-placed to lead. As John Donahue and Richard Zeckhauser recently argued, "From de Tocqueville's day to the present, Americans' knack for cobbling together pragmatic alliances has often served to offset our weak suit of formal government."[25] The formal government, however, must recognize the strategic value of networks and make network mapping, connecting, orchestrating and catalyzing a defined part of every foreign service officer's portfolio.

Conclusion

Arnold Wolfers wrote of the "'billiard ball' model" of the "multistate system," in which "every state represents a closed, impermeable, and sovereign unit, completely separated from all other states."[26] States in 2012 sometimes still fit that description well enough – in high-stakes negotiations over nuclear weapons programs, for instance, or in strategic maneuvering over territorial boundaries

or natural resources. For the most part, however, 21st-century states are better represented as Lego billiard balls. They can interact as whole entities, but all the pieces can also come apart to be combined with pieces not only from other states but also from the private and the civic sectors. States are open, permeable and linked in ever-changing and ever-denser ways to other states.

Network centrality is a grand strategy that can be consistent with a policy of strategic restraint, careful cost-benefit analysis and responsible stakeholdership as the price of being a great power participating in and reshaping the global order.

That is the networked world. It is the world that most people, including government officials, will live in most of the time in the 21st century. The grand strategies of the 20th century no longer fit this world. They appear to, but they only skim the surface of the forces that are actually shaping the political, economic and social landscape around the world. The United States can selectively engage other states with respect to specific conflicts and crises. It can deter other states, pursue soft primacy over them, restrain itself from intervening in their conflicts and shift burdens onto them. It can promote democratic and free-market states.

However, none of these strategies can adequately or effectively address the threats posed by pandemics, climate change, nonstate proliferation and terrorist networks, food insecurity and resource scarcity. Equally important, none can fully harness the entire spectrum of social and economic assets available to tackle these problems and to address issues like oppression, corruption, stagnating economies and ethnic and religious conflict that so often underpin more traditional geopolitical problems. Moreover, none can offer an algorithm for figuring out where, when and how the United States should position itself in an ever-denser web of interdependent global economic, political and social relations.

Network centrality is a grand strategy that can be consistent with a policy of strategic restraint, careful cost-benefit analysis and responsible stakeholdership as the price of being a great power participating in and reshaping the global order. It is a strategy that sees and deploys *all* the assets of the United States and its allies and partners, sometimes for direct action and sometimes for indirect action. It is a strategy of connection for a networked age.

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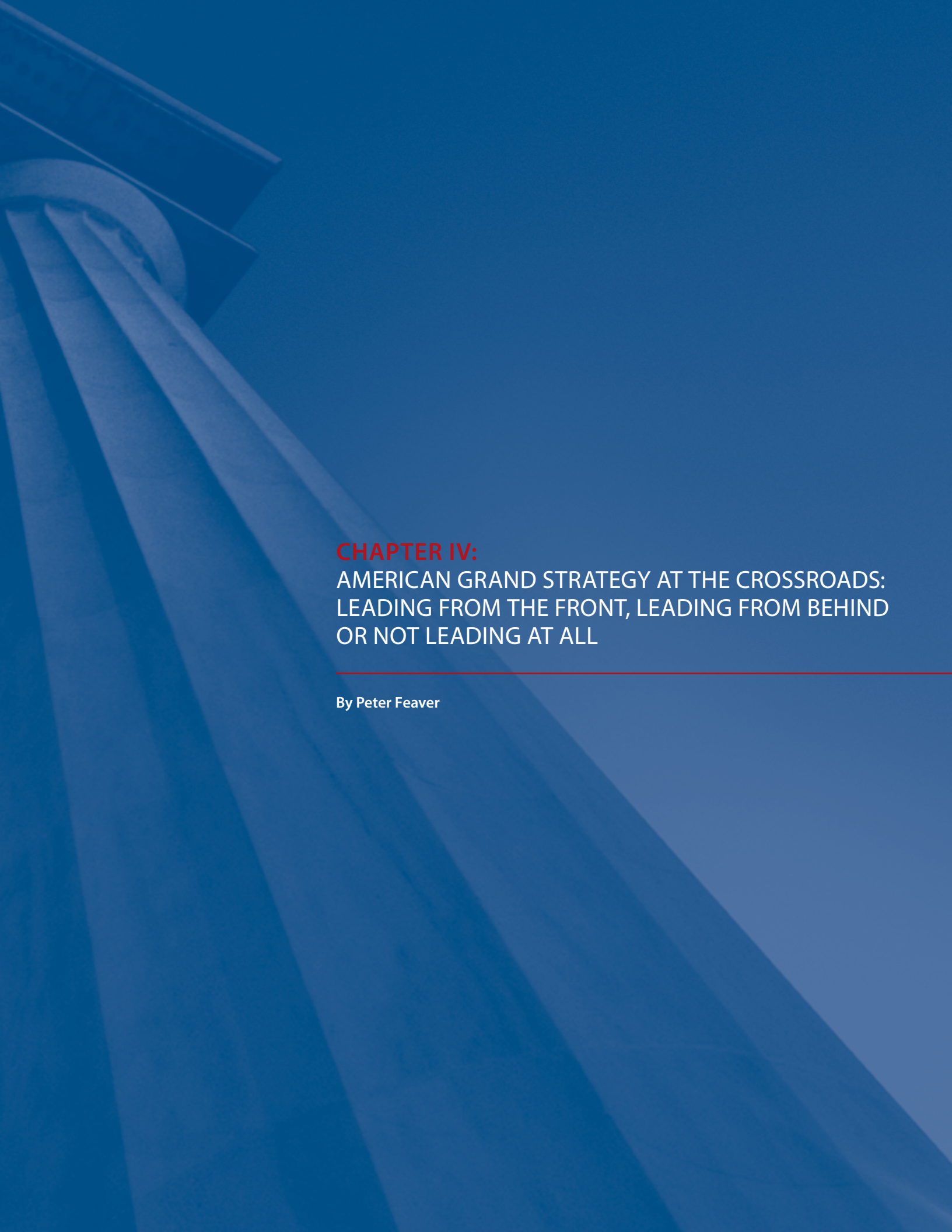

CHAPTER IV:

AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY AT THE CROSSROADS: LEADING FROM THE FRONT, LEADING FROM BEHIND OR NOT LEADING AT ALL

By Peter Feaver

America's Path

Grand Strategy for the Next Administration

AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY AT THE CROSSROADS: LEADING FROM THE FRONT, LEADING FROM BEHIND OR NOT LEADING AT ALL

By Peter Feaver

For decades, the strategic community has been debating American grand strategy with more vigor than rigor. The result has been the occasional strategic misstep, along with more pervasive strategic misconceptions. At every turn, commentators have talked as if that moment was the crucial hinge in American history that would set the course for future generations. Viewed in hindsight, most of those turning points seem more like small oscillations on a predictable trajectory.

Today, the vigor of the debate is reaching new highs, and it is time for the rigor to match. For just as a stopped clock is right on occasion, Americans might actually be at a true turning point. Because of fiscal challenges and war-weariness, U.S. political leaders might in fact be considering changes that would substantially alter America's role in the world.

My thesis is simple: The grand strategy that has guided the United States in the post-Cold War era – a strategy of leadership that has the United States bearing the burdens of the sole superpower in order to preserve the existing global order as long as possible – has proven successful through extraordinary times. It could serve the United States well in the future, but it is only viable if Americans are willing to bear those burdens. Current debates about defense cuts, ending wars without assured successful outcomes and downsizing the U.S. global posture raise doubts about whether the legacy strategy will continue to be viable. I believe it can be, if it is refined. Refining the existing strategy so as to preserve America's pre-eminent global role is preferable to replacing that strategy with an alternative that dramatically curtails that role. To preserve its viability, Americans need to:

- Scrutinize skeptically the $487 billion in defense cuts over the next 10 years that have already been agreed to and resist pressures to cut further (especially avoiding the catastrophic cuts of the

sequestration mechanism, which would double that amount);[1]

- Adequately fund diplomacy and development accounts, the non-military tools of statecraft;
- Restore U.S. leverage in key regions (especially the Middle East); and
- Put the U.S. fiscal house on a more sure foundation.

To do all of that, the United States also may need to do one more thing: Recognize that the greater danger to the United States is not repeating the last war (Iraq/Afghanistan) but repeating the one before that (the Cold War). Grand strategies tend to be oriented at preventing the last war. The Cold War grand strategy of containment sought to confront the Soviet threat in such a way as to avoid another global hot war like World War II. Post-Cold War grand strategy has sought to confront global challenges and opportunities without slipping back into a new Cold War against a hostile peer rival capable of challenging the United States globally.

An important impetus behind the current ferment about grand strategy is a similar desire to avoid "another Iraq" (and perhaps "another Afghanistan"). Some of the steps that have been taken in the past several years have been driven not by a cold-blooded assessment of how best to secure American interests so much as by a hot-blooded (albeit fully understandable) desire to make sure that the United States does not incur the familiar costs of Iraq or Afghanistan again. A grand strategy optimized to avoid another Iraq might achieve that objective, but at the expense of failing to achieve the more important goal of avoiding a decline in the U.S. position such that a hostile peer rival could emerge to fundamentally upend the global order.

The Utility of the Legacy Grand Strategy

The prime imperative of American grand strategy of the past 20 years has been to preserve and extend the existing global order.[2] The primary threats identified by the strategy are distinguished by time frame. In the long run, the greatest threat is the emergence of a hostile peer rival who could rewrite the global order – in short, another Cold War. In the short run, the threat is any menace that, although less than a hostile peer rival, is nevertheless capable of imposing a grave disruption onto the global order. Confronting these threats so as to preserve the global order has required a five-pillared grand strategy.

Pillar I involves dissuading the rise of a hostile peer rival by use of a "velvet-covered iron fist." The iron fist entails maintaining defense spending in excess of what is needed to meet near-term threats, thus staying far ahead of would-be rivals and thereby dissuading them from trying to catch up (or at least preventing them from being able to catch up). The velvet glove entails accommodating would-be rivals, giving them equity stakes in the global order in excess of their current power. The velvet glove is most plainly captured in the responsible stakeholder approach, which has given China an outsized stake in the existing global order as a way of dissuading it from disrupting that order as its power increases. The glove covers a fist of military superiority and alliance hedging, in the form of improved relations with India, China's most serious regional rival – even though those improved relations have come at the cost of accommodating Indian geostrategic demands regarding nuclear weapons.

Pillar II involves investing in efforts to push the world to be more like the United States politically by promoting the spread of democracy. Of course, promoting American values has been a hallmark of U.S. strategy (at the very least, of rhetorical strategy) from the earliest days of the Republic. However, with the end of the Cold War, abetting new waves of democratization became a more explicit and higher-priority foreign policy goal. The strategic premise is that democracy

promotion advances not merely U.S. values but also U.S. interests because stable democracies will undergird the strength of the existing (favorable) global order.

Pillar III of the grand strategy is the economic counterpart: push the world to be more like the United States economically by promoting globalization, market capitalism and free trade. This was the so-called "Washington consensus," the widely-held view that the U.S. triumph during the Cold War had vindicated the superiority of Western capitalism as the surest way to prosperity. The Great Recession of the past several years has shaken this consensus, but American strategy is premised on the idea that in the long run, all states benefit from a more open global economic order and that it is worth the costs and risks to shore up that system rather than replace it with a radical alternative.

Pillars II and III can be mutually reinforcing. Market democracies – states that embrace both a liberal political order and a liberal economic order – would be the most stable system; political progress would lead to greater economic prosperity, and economic prosperity would lock in democratization. Together, the two pillars would lock in a global status quo that favored an existing global order with the United States as the sole superpower.

Pillar IV of the grand strategy involves identifying and confronting the highest priority near-term threat: the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to rogue states. Rogue states with WMD may not pose as great a threat as the Soviet Union once did, but the legacy strategy identified WMD proliferation as the most lethal near-term threat to the existing global order. Accordingly, successive administrations have used negotiations where possible and force where necessary – multilateral force where they could, unilateral force where they had no alternative – to prevent certain states from realizing their WMD ambitions.

Although all post-Cold War administrations have had those four pillars at the core of their grand strategy,[3] policymakers have debated what additional pillars, if any, to add. The Clinton administration tried to elevate the problem of failed states and the solution of assertive multilateralism to the top rank of grand strategy emphasis. However, the mixed record of success, partial success and outright failure – in Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, Sudan and Kosovo – meant that this effort did not enjoy as much bipartisan support as did the rogue state WMD pillar.

A consensus on **Pillar V** emerged after the attacks of 9/11 elevated the urgency of defeating transnational terrorist networks inspired by militant Islamism. As a top-tier concern, the threat of terror received priority access to strategic attention and resources, including a dramatically expanded toolbox. Yet President George W. Bush quite explicitly continued the other elements of the existing grand strategy, including heavy investments in defense modernization aimed at threats beyond the war on terror. Some critics have claimed that the United States "took its eye off the ball" of the long-term challenges of Pillars I, II and III to focus on the more immediate threat of terrorism, but in fact, successive administrations have spent considerable resources trying to do it all. Indeed, the Bush administration saw those pre-existing pillars as crucial to addressing the terrorist threat; thus, the "freedom agenda" of Pillars II and III helped confront the ideological roots of the al Qaeda network without slipping into the "religious war" frame that Osama bin Laden and his followers hoped to impose. Moreover, President Bush placed special emphasis on the nexus between Pillars IV and V: the prospects that a terrorist group might secure WMD, most likely from one of the existing arsenals of a rogue state.

Correcting Misconceptions About the Legacy Grand Strategy

Two conceptual confusions hobble debates about American grand strategy: [4]

Misconception #1: The belief that although America had a coherent grand strategy (containment) to guide it during the Cold War, it has lacked such a framework in the post-Cold War era. Many observers view American foreign policy in the post-Cold War era as a series of ad hoc decisions, lacking the coherent logic of the containment grand strategy. To be sure, post-Cold War national security has been riven with debates about the criteria for the use of force, the urgency of confronting regional threats, the extent to which human rights should take priority over other national interests, and so on. Yet that was also the case during the Cold War containment era. In fact, the belief that the United States' recent strategy has not been as coherent as the one it had during the Cold War is largely the result of an ahistorical nostalgia for how coherent the Cold War grand strategy really was. If the standard that post-Cold War grand strategy needs to meet is one set by a containment strategy that left up for debate whether and how to contain in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and the Central Front, then that standard has been met.

Misconception #2: The belief that the post-Cold War strategy has been a strategic disaster. Some analysts concede that there has been a coherent grand strategy but they denigrate its accomplishments.[5] The denigration can skirt on the edge of caricature: bequeathing a grandiose label that no American president would ever endorse, such as "militarism" or "global dominance;" treating Iraq as if it were the rule rather than the exception; and giving weight to myriad adverse developments, from housing bubbles to cataclysmic weather patterns, while discounting positive developments. In fact, as great powers go, the United States can boast a remarkably strong record. Is there a great power in the modern era that has had as good a 250-year-run as the United States? Or a better 100-year, 50-year or even 20-year run?[6] Compared with the dire predictions of some grand strategists about what confronted the United States with the end of Cold War bipolarity, the United States has fared especially well. Credit is due, in part, to the responsible grand strategy pursued by successive administrations. (Of late, the fact of America's success has fueled another curious variant of this misconception: the idea that the United States enjoys a fairly secure position not because of the grand strategy but because that strategy was not, in fact, needed.)[7]

Despite rhetoric suggesting major change, President Barack Obama has largely continued the grand strategy laid out by his post-Cold War predecessors. In his 2008 campaign, Obama did talk about making a significant change to the grand strategy by elevating climate change as a sixth pillar. However, once Obama was elected, climate change took a back seat to health-care reform, and instead, he continued along the lines of the legacy strategy, at least until now.

Successive rounds of defense cuts, an inability to confront the underlying fiscal crisis and the gradual erosion of the U.S. position in key regions like the Middle East have raised doubts about the continued viability of the strategy. Moreover, if defense cuts were to double, as envisioned in the sequestration provisions of the 2011 debt-ceiling deal, the gap between ends and means would collapse the strategy, as most advocates and critics alike concede. Perhaps for the first time since the early post-Cold War era, the United States may be on the cusp of a profound strategic debate that will result in subtractions from, and not merely additions to, our grand strategy.

The "Obvious" Part of the Next Grand Strategy

Regardless of how the strategic debate unfolds, some of America's core objectives are uncontroversial. Any grand strategy must address the following long-standing interests:

- Deterring and interdicting attacks on the U.S. homeland.
- Preventing wars between the great powers, even when the United States is not a target or combatant.
- Promoting an open international economic order.
- Promoting respect for human rights and the spread of liberal democratic institutions.
- Preventing WMD from reaching the hands of rogue states or terrorist non-state actors.
- Preserving a stable global energy market, which requires secure and stable petroleum and natural gas deliveries.
- Honoring treaty obligations (NATO, Japan, etc.) and helping friendly strategic partners (Israel, Mexico) deter threats to their interests and stability.

Meanwhile, some long-standing features of America's global position will persist:

- **America is the most powerful global actor, but it is not so powerful that it can dictate terms to everyone else. It is, however, powerful enough to underwrite the provision of public goods.** Since 1776, the United States has never been so powerful that it could impose its will on the rest of the world. Yet since 1945, the United States has been the most powerful single actor – for the past two decades, significantly more powerful than would-be rivals. Importantly, it has been sufficiently powerful that it can underwrite the global rules of order. This has involved shouldering greater loads when burden-sharing arrangements break down; committing American prestige and resources to address problems even when U.S. direct interests are modest compared with those of its partners; and, except when urgent national security interests militate otherwise, deferring to constraints from multilateral institutions even though the United States has the power to act unilaterally. This power premium will continue for at least a decade but may erode after that.
- **America's military advantage relative to others is greater than its economic advantage.** In terms of share of global gross domestic product, the power of the United States is somewhat less than what it was roughly half a century ago, and it will likely recede slowly, if at all, over the next several decades. In terms of share of military power projection – the capacity to deploy substantial military forces far from the homeland – the United States has enjoyed a large and growing advantage over rivals for the past two decades. In the coming years, that advantage could begin to recede as the Chinese military ramps up.
- **There are more demands for American commitment, especially military commitment, than the United States can afford to meet.** Principles and long-standing interests – including an interest in promoting U.S. values – help winnow the list of requests, opportunities and problems that have stubbornly resisted all nonmilitary measures. Any administration will have to allow near-term cost-benefit calculations and other pragmatic considerations to determine sequencing and prioritization.

Those who believe that America is in decline mischaracterize these last three features as novel developments, some perhaps interpreting them as very recent systemic punishments imposed by an alleged American overreach in the war on terror. In fact, they were a constraint throughout the post-Cold War period (and, arguably, during the Cold War as well), which was readily appreciated by anyone with policymaking responsibility.

The United States should seek cooperation with China where interests overlap but hedge against conflicts of interest by shoring up its alliances and partnerships with other regional actors, from Japan to India.

Properly understood, the implications of these features for American grand strategy are clear:

- **America should engage selectively.** The United States will have broader diplomatic than military engagement, and broader peaceful military (e.g., presence missions, military-to-military contact) than violent military engagement.
- **America should seek the legitimacy and burden-sharing of multilateral action wherever possible.** Multilateralism introduces the familiar constraints of buck-passing, chain-ganging and fundamental conflicts of interest over (or at least the interpretation of) world events. But the United States would usually prefer to accept those constraints instead of going it alone.
- **America should resort to unilateral action wherever necessary.** True unilateral action is exceedingly rare – the closest example is the early days of the 2001 attack on Afghanistan and, even then, the United States worked with local partners (and NATO allies joined within weeks). What is usually called unilateralism (for instance, the 2003 Iraq War) is better seen as grudging multilateralism with some more, some less reluctant partners. Yet when interests are high enough and collective action is halting enough, the United States should act rather than wait for others.
- **America should lead, sometimes engaging even when its narrow immediate interests are not directly threatened, because if it does not lead, other actors will not pick up the slack.** The United States has invested heavily in building and extending multilateral institutions to underwrite the global order, but those institutions themselves depend on sustained and active U.S. leadership to be effective.

Refining the Grand Strategy on the Margins

The legacy grand strategy incorporates well the "obvious" parts, and any viable American grand strategy should include those features. The debate, such as it is, turns on less obvious concerns, which may require refining the legacy strategy.

PREVENTING THE IRON FROM ERODING BENEATH THE VELVET

The "velvet fist" is still the best way to preserve global stability and American interests, especially in light of the rise of China. The United States need not fear the peaceful rise of a politically reformed China that functions as a responsible stakeholder in the international system. Moreover, the United States has no right to be smug because there are analogs in American history (or even the present) to many of the problems one sees in China. However, China's challenges are real, and in the medium term, the United States may have more to fear from China's weaknesses than from China's strengths.

The United States should seek cooperation with China where interests overlap but hedge against conflicts of interest by shoring up its alliances and partnerships with other regional actors, from Japan to India. It should not shrink from pressing China on human rights yet should not seek out diplomatic crises that yield pyrrhic victories (or worse). Other gestures, like deploying a token force of 2,500 Marines to Australia,[8] are symbolic but worthy demonstrations of the nation's long-standing commitment to the region.

The problem is that the much-ballyhooed strategic pivot to Asia is undermined by three concurrent

developments. First is the unraveling of the U.S. position in the broader Middle East at precisely the same time that China is trying to strengthen its posture (and hurt the U.S. posture) in that very region. In geostrategic terms, the balance of power in Asia is no longer confined to Asian territories but is increasingly shaped by developments elsewhere, just as was the case with the U.S.-Soviet balance during the Cold War.

Second is the projected erosion of American military strength occasioned by deep defense cuts coupled with uncontrolled cost spirals, especially in pay and benefits.[9] Because of the former, there are fewer bucks, and because of the latter, the United States gets less bang for its buck. The U.S. military advantage over the next-most-likely competitor is on track to narrow, perhaps dramatically, to levels considerably below what has been the post-Cold War norm. The strategy can sustain a bit of narrowing, and the current planned cuts may well be tolerable, especially if they pave the way to a political deal for broader fiscal reform. Yet continued cuts without a broader fiscal deal would only create pressure for still more cuts, and at some point, the strategy becomes nonviable.

The United States may be close to that point with the budgeted defense cuts. Going much further, and perhaps going as far as the cuts outlined in President Obama's fiscal year 2013 budget, involves managing unacceptable risk – specifically, six risks that seem like bad bets:[10]

- The risk that America's European allies will not adequately carry the burdens that the United States is shifting to their shoulders.
- The risk that adversaries will exploit a crisis because they believe that a less-capable United States is tied down in one theater.
- The risk that the United States will require large stabilization forces even though the strategy assumes it will not. In the past, U.S. leaders have often guessed wrong about the kinds of forces they need for the next conflict and found the military ill-prepared, lacking the very capabilities it had even a few years before the conflict.
- The risk that Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan will unravel in ways that even a United States determined to "end" the wars will not be able to ignore, thus requiring a recommitment of larger resources – and that those resources will not be available because of deep defense cuts.
- The risk that an under-resourced pivot will provoke China into an arms race that U.S. defense cuts would make harder to win because of foregone defense investments.
- The risk that the United States will lack the political will to fight in the cheaper-but-dumber mode that defense cuts will require. It is cheaper to fight dumb because to fight smart requires using expensive high technology to minimize the human costs of war. Ever since Vietnam, the United States has tended to increase the financial costs it was willing to bear in order to reduce the human costs of its national security. It will be very hard to reverse that. The United States is inching toward a point where it cannot afford to fight wars in the manner it likes to fight them – namely, with as few human casualties as possible. One solution, of course, is not to fight the wars, but if Americans choose to fight, they may do so at a higher human cost than they have come to expect over the past quarter century.

Third, beyond these defense cuts are the related deep cuts in other two "D's": development and diplomacy. Development and diplomacy have been historically under-resourced compared to defense, and the balance may be even more skewed in the new fiscal environment which has put even greater strain on the non-military budget accounts.

This is not an appeal to provoke a new Cold War by igniting an arms and national security spending race. Rather, it is an appeal to recommit to the strategic

premise underlying this pillar: that American weakness is more provocative than American strength, so paying short-term costs yields long-term benefits. The strategy can afford some cuts in defense, development and diplomacy, as already planned, but the United States can also afford more spending in these three areas than the declinists claim. In the current environment, the United States is more likely to cut too deeply than to spend too unwisely.

RESTORING THE LEVERAGE LOST IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The United States is struggling to influence the course of events in Libya, Egypt, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Iraq and Iran – all places where political transformations appear to be drifting against U.S. interests. Although the United States may favor a goal of "human liberty protected by democratic institutions,"[11] that may be a full generation or more away. The more modest goal of having governmental institutions face some form of representative accountability and transparency may be all that is achievable in the near term.

Reversing the downward trajectory of America's influence in the Middle East will require tailored country-by-country strategies because each case is driven by idiosyncratic factors. Yet one major exacerbating factor that cuts across the region has been the loss of leverage in Iraq. The surge enabled Bush's successor to end the Iraq war on terms of his choosing. President Obama did that. He wound down kinetic operations and tried to negotiate permission for a continued U.S. military force to conduct strategic over-watch, but he refused to commit much presidential capital to the effort and, when it failed, embraced a complete withdrawal.

As a consequence, Americans are not fighting and dying in Iraq, but American interests are also not securely guaranteed. On the contrary, prospects for a pluralistic, unified Iraqi government are bleak, Iranian meddling in Iraqi domestic and foreign policies is at an all-time high and the U.S. capacity to influence the trajectory of events is arguably lower than it was even in 2002 when, at the very least, the United States was paying close attention to developments in Iraq and could credibly threaten coercive intervention. Today, following the failure of the negotiations with the Iraqi government, the U.S. commitment to, and thus leverage over, Iraq is at the lowest point in a decade.

It may be too late to secure the kind of longer-term strategic partnership with Iraq that involves the continued U.S. military presence that the designers of the 2008 strategic framework agreement hoped would be possible, and that seemed possible even a few years ago. But it is worth trying. Such a military presence would have been (and would still be) a capable hedge against Iranian expansionism, but any strategic partnership that prevents Iraq from slipping further into Iranian hands would help restore some leverage. Such a partnership with a united and pluralistic Iraq would also be a worthy model for other post-Arab Spring bilateral relations, especially with Egypt.

The damage depends heavily on how two other related challenges unfold. If Iran develops nuclear weapons despite the efforts of the international community to prevent it, the opportunity costs of what might have been done differently in Iraq will be significantly higher. Likewise, if Syria descends into full-blown sectarian civil war, reaching the level seen in Iraq in 2006 or perhaps worse, then a political unraveling of Iraq could be that much more consequential (and that much more irreversible) since Syria shares ethnic fault lines with Iraq. Syria and Iran meddled without getting engulfed in Iraq's civil war, but it is not likely that an unraveling Iraq could resist getting sucked into a full-blown Sunni vs. Shia civil war in Syria.

GETTING AMERICA'S OWN FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER

An urgent priority on the international economic front actually concerns the U.S. domestic economy, specifically the inability of the American political

system to deal with its structural fiscal crisis. Other internal challenges could threaten America's global standing, such as the crisis in education or the inability to forge a stable and broadly popular immigration policy that respects the rule of law while also preserving America's centuries-old strategic advantage as a community of immigrants. Yet the fiscal crisis cuts across all of these issues, exacerbating domestic and foreign problems by hamstringing U.S. leaders.

Concerns about the fiscal crisis have driven the deep cuts in defense spending that have put U.S. grand strategy at risk. Given the views of the Democratic base, any grand bargain addressing the fiscal crisis may well require the planned defense cuts, but the United States cannot dig its way out of the current fiscal hole merely by cutting defense spending. If this persists, then the other necessary refinements to the grand strategy will not be possible.

Indeed, solving the structural fiscal problem may even be a necessary prerequisite for dealing with the challenge on the horizon that makes the best claim for consideration as a top-tier grand strategic priority: climate change. There is little chance that the next president will arrive with a mandate for enacting costly approaches to this challenge if the political system does not confront the nearer-term fiscal crisis of unfunded entitlement programs.

CONFRONTING PROLIFERATION BEFORE AND AFTER IRAN

Weapons of mass destruction in the hands of rogue states or transnational terrorist networks remains a plausible near-term catastrophe that could upend the prevailing global order. The place where this is most vividly seen is the current stand-off with Iran, which could have long-term consequences for the viability of future nonproliferation efforts. All administrations have declared that it is "unacceptable" for Iran to have a nuclear weapon, yet Iran seems closer than ever to taking this fateful step. Although there is a lively debate among academics as to whether a nuclear-armed Iran could be contained and deterred,[12] policymakers have tended to view the costs of deterrence and/or containment as unacceptably high.[13] Most of the optimistic assessments ignore the path dependency of a nuclear-armed Iran: Regardless of what the models say in an academic laboratory, a nuclear-armed Iran would only occur after the manifest failure of decades of concerted international efforts, along with defiance of explicit military threats from both Israel and the United States (not to mention years of public rhetoric about the dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran). Even under rosy assumptions, then, this would constitute a profound disruption to the existing order. U.S. grand strategy must continue to seek a third alternative to living with Iranian nuclear weapons and waging a war to prevent the Iranians from crossing the nuclear threshold.

BALANCING HARD AND SOFT POWER IN THE WAR ON TERROR

Soft power – the ability to get other actors to *want* what the United States wants – applies to all of the other elements of the grand strategy, but it has special purchase in the war on terror. In general, soft power is a poor substitute for hard power – the ability to get other actors to *do* what the United States wants – and it rarely has yielded tangible results in the face of strong conflicts of interest between nations. To be sure, soft power can be a useful complement to hard power, and America's historical soft-power advantage is worth preserving and restoring, especially after the damage inflicted by the Iraq saga and the Great Recession. Grand strategists must remember, however, that soft power involves getting other actors to want what the United States wants, *not* getting other actors to like the United States. The latter is of only modest utility for the former.

Two recent developments have underscored the need for a vibrant soft-power approach. First, the upheavals of the Arab Spring have greatly increased the stakes of the war of ideas – winning hearts and minds in Muslim communities across the globe,

but especially in the Arab world. The upheavals do not automatically redound to the benefit of the most extreme militant Islamists – it is possible that the (moderately) peaceful transition to responsive governments has undermined some of al Qaeda's appeal. However, Islamists overall enjoy greater political influence today than they have in modern times, and it is possible that the more radical actors will eclipse the moderates, as has happened in previous revolutionary periods. If American policymakers can influence this debate in favor of those who share a larger measure of American values and interests, the long-term consequences for the war on terror will be profound. Americans have at most modest influence, but it may be more influence than any other major external state actor; thus, it should be wielded deliberately and effectively.

Second, the killing of bin Laden and subsequent disarray in al Qaeda's leadership has presented the United States with an excellent opportunity. The Obama administration, to its credit, has seized the opportunity in some hard-power terms, continuing to press attacks against terrorist leadership targets in Pakistan and elsewhere. However, the unraveling of progress in Iraq seems to augur a similar unraveling in Afghanistan, and chaos in one or both countries could undo much of the progress that the drone strikes have won, especially if the United States is losing the war of ideas.

The signature tool of the war on terror in recent years has been targeted drone strikes. Although the drone strikes have inflicted great damage on al Qaeda and affiliated groups, they have not culminated in the strategic effect that they might have produced if augmented with a more robust soft-power strategy that engaged in the war of ideas more effectively. Moreover, the drone strikes themselves may prove to be a self-limiting tool. They are enormously unpopular in Pakistan, and doubts about their use are growing among U.S. allies. Ironically, given Obama's enormous celebrity status in Europe, U.S. relations with its NATO allies and European partners have declined in recent years. Indeed, with the notable exception of Iranian sanctions, where the Europeans, led by hawkish France, have been even more forward-leaning than the United States, the United States has struggled to get European cooperation on key objectives for many policy questions. And now that the dovish François Hollande has replaced the hawkish Nicolas Sarkozy, France is unlikely to continue to lead so congenially (for U.S. purposes). In sum given European concerns, the drone war could end up being for the next term what Guantanamo Bay was to Bush's first term: a soft-power injury that hobbles other cooperation in the war on terror.

Conclusion: Paying the Costs of Leading and Maintaining Flexibility

A grand strategy of leadership best serves American interests in the long run, but it is not a cheap strategy. It does not require that the United States bear *any* burden, or pay *any* price, but a strategy that calls for the United States to remain comprehensively engaged throughout the world, using all elements of national power, and not merely in extremis to repulse an attack on the homeland, is costly. Indeed, cost is repeatedly invoked as a reason to jettison the current U.S. approach in favor of a less ambitious grand strategy. Critics exaggerate the price, however, by focusing on the costs of action, especially military action, at the expense of a serious consideration of the costs of inaction.[14]

This is partly structural: The costs – financial, human and otherwise – of military action are hard to estimate, but easier and more salient than estimating the true costs of not acting. This helps explain why, throughout history, the United States has tended not to use military force as often as the apparent demand would suggest and why, when it does, it tends to do so late. Opponents of military action are able to warn in dramatic and compelling fashion about the costs of a prospective use of force. This strategic bias has been accentuated in recent years because the Iraq war proved so much more costly than advocates expected.

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Critics of American "militarism" who claim an over-reliance on military force make a simple analytical error: They focus on the dependent variable of military use and fail to adequately evaluate the many non-uses of force.[15] Maybe the reason that critics think the United States uses the military too much is that they only talk about uses (especially Iraq and Afghanistan) and rarely talk about non-uses (such as Rwanda, Burundi, Algeria, Kashmir, Sudan, Congo or Eritrea).

Restoring American leverage through renewal is preferable to a cut-one's-losses approach that tries to build leverage in one theater by locking in defeat in another. This is the great concern of a strategic "pivot": If, in the process of freeing up strategic resources for the Asian theater, the United States undermines success in the Middle East, the U.S. global position will not improve. This does not mean that the United States must continue to pour resources into futile causes, but it does mean that investments with a reasonable chance of improving conditions in one theater can yield dividends in other theaters as well.

Embracing the legacy grand strategy does not mean viewing the world through a decades-old lens. A major virtue of the containment grand strategy was its adaptability to new conditions; the same basic Soviet challenge that gave rise to containment required very different approaches in the later years. Similarly, the fluid post-Cold War environment has required changes, and the grand strategy has proven its fitness by incorporating those adaptations.

There are plenty of candidates for "new issues" that will be more prominent grand strategic concerns for the next 20 years than they have for the past 20:

- For decades, futurists have been warning about the growing cyber threat, and to date, it has not lived up to the hype. However, in recent years, the United States has invested heavily to improve its capacity to address cyber concerns, and those investments may yet prove timely.
- The opening of the Arctic region to greater commercial exploitation could change the geo-strategic map in profound ways.
- The global energy market looks vastly different today than it did just a few short years ago, and new discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean have the potential to change it still further. No American grand strategist has ever had to factor in Israel as a global energy exporter, but that may change soon.
- Growing security and stability problems in Mexico, along with the cross-border reach of gangs, mean that the United States could face a greater security threat on its border than it has seen in a hundred years.

All of these and more could force strategists to further refine the legacy grand strategy to better address current concerns. However, it is likely that the required refinements will be marginal and that a grand strategy committed to active American global leadership will still be the best way to advance American interests for decades to come – just as it has been until now.

ENDNOTES

1. See Travis Sharp, "Down Payment: Defense Guidance, 2013 Defense Budget and the Risks of Sequestration" (Center for a New American Security, February 2012).

2. This section draws on material from Stephen Biddle and Peter Feaver, "Assessing Strategic Choices in the War on Terror," in *How 9/11 Changed Our Ways of War,* ed. James Burk (manuscript under review).

3. I do not know of a single document that lays out the post-Cold War grand strategy explicitly in these terms, but this outline is readily discernible in the primary strategy documents that successive administrations did develop. Indeed, to a remarkable degree, the outline of this approach is evident in the draft Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) that the Department of Defense developed in 1992. The leaked drafts generated a firestorm of protest, and the final version toned down the rhetoric considerably. However, as a rudimentary forecasting guide for the actual U.S. policies that emerged in the subsequent decades, the initial leaked drafts of the 1992 DPG hold up remarkably well. See Eric Edelman, "The Strange Career of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance," in *In Uncertain Times: American Foreign Policy after the Berlin Wall and 9/11*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 63-77. Pillars II and III are made quite explicit in President Bill Clinton's National Security Strategy, released in July 1994; indeed, the Clinton administration gave the strategy the label "A Strategy of Enlargement and Engagement," deliberately echoing Cold War containment policy. Candidate George W. Bush campaigned against Clinton's emphasis on failed states and promised other tonal shifts (including a more "humble" foreign policy), but the essence of what he advocated involved a reorientation back onto the four preexisting pillars.

4. This draws in part from Peter Feaver, "8 Myths about American Grand Strategy," Shadow Government blog on ForiegnPolicy.com, November 23, 2011, http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/23/8_myths_about_american_grand_strategy.

5. See, for example, Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Andrew Bacevich, "The 'American Century' Has Ended," Salon.com, November 14, 2011; and John Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design," *The National Interest* (January-February 2011).

6. Walter Russell Mead makes this point well in *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy And How it Changed the World* (New York: Routledge Press, 2002), especially 3-12.

7. See Micah Zenko and Michael Cohen, "Clear and Present Safety," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2012), 79-93.

8. Daniel Blumenthal, "Against the East Asia Pivot," Shadow Government blog on ForiegnPolicy.com, November 18, 2011, http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/11/18/against_the_east_asia_pivot.

9. See Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker, "Panetta to Offer Strategy for Cutting Military Budget," *The New York Times*, January 2, 2012.

10. This is adapted from Peter Feaver, "Quick Reactions to the Obama Strategy Roll-out," Shadow Government blog on ForiegnPolicy.com, January 5, 2012, http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/01/05/quick_reactions_to_the_obama_strategy_roll_out.

11. The White House, "The National Security Strategy of the United States" (March 2006), 5.

12. Pessimists about containing and/or deterring a nuclear Iran include Alan J. Kuperman, "There's Only One Way to Stop Iran," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2009; and Matthew Kroenig, "Time to Attack Iran," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2012). Optimists include Barry Posen, "We Can Live with a Nuclear Iran," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2006; and Stephen M. Walt, "How Not to Contain Iran," blog on ForeignPolicy.com, March 5, 2010, http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/03/05/how_not_to_contain_iran.

13. This has been the official policy of every recent administration, but of course some policy advisors have argued to the contrary. See, for example, Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, "The Grand Bargain," *Washington Monthly* (August/September/October 2008).

14. This draws, in part, on material from Peter Feaver, "Libya Debate Still Could Benefit from More Rigor," Shadow Government blog on ForiegnPolicy.com, March 17, 2011, http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/03/17/libya_debate_still_could_benefit_from_more_rigor.

15. The error is understandable, given the difficulty of measuring non-uses of force. However, consider just one possible estimate: conflicts in which a substantial number of people died and yet the United States did not intervene militarily. According to data compiled from various sources at http://www.systemicpeace.org/warlist.htm, over 3.6 million people died in conflicts where the United States did not intervene militarily (the vast majority in sub-Saharan Africa). About 620,000 died in conflicts where the United States did intervene; most of those deaths occurred well before the United States intervened, so the comparison is even more dramatic. No one is suggesting that the United States has an obligation to intervene in every violent conflict, but critics of American "militarism" rarely give due attention to the many cases where American military force might have been plausible but was never used.

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