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**Assessing America's War on Terror:
Confronting Insurgency, Cementing Primacy**
Ashley J. Tellis

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Foreword

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, defined the presidency of George W. Bush, who responded by projecting U.S. military power on a global scale. In the months following the attacks, the administration forcefully evicted the Taliban regime and its Al Qaeda sponsors from Afghanistan, while expanding basing rights and military cooperation, for the first time, in Central and South Asia. After unsuccessfully seeking United Nations endorsement, it then quickly defeated Saddam Hussein's army in Iraq. Beyond the challenge posed by Al Qaeda and other radical Islamist terrorist groups, additional threats emerged in a post-September 11 world: fallout from weak and failed states, the global effects of political instability in the Middle East and Asia, and the risks posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their potential nexus with terrorist groups.

The United States has waged this war on terrorism against the backdrop of more traditional geo-political concerns. America has long realized the strategic importance of Asia for international stability and economic growth, but continuing political, economic, and military developments pose new and significant challenges to U.S. leadership in the region. The rise of China and India, as well as Russia's struggle to resume a leading global role, are indicative of tectonic shifts in geopolitical power and influence to Asia. Additional issues, including possible conflict over Kashmir, tensions in the Taiwan Strait, the maturing nuclear threat from North Korea, and political stability in Central, South, and Southeast Asia all assume new meaning in light of the ongoing war on terrorism.

The current issue of the *NBR Analysis* is unique in scope and range. It is also the first time that the *NBR Analysis* has been co-sponsored with another institution—the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—which for two years has worked with NBR to launch the Strategic Asia Program. Dr. Ashley J. Tellis, Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment, draws on recent government service to offer a distinctive perspective of U.S. foreign policy at the intersection of two interlocking challenges: the prosecution of the war on terrorism and the maintenance of U.S. preeminence. Dr. Tellis begins with the premise that the Bush administration entered office decidedly skeptical of the post-Cold War “end of history” thesis, and thus sought to more explicitly manage the rise of potential adversaries and competitors in Asia. With the onset of September 11, however, the administration rapidly assumed the new priority

of confronting radical Islam, in addition to managing U.S. primacy. He writes that this balancing act is an unrecognized “signal achievement” of the Bush presidency.

That said, on balance Dr. Tellis offers mixed marks to the Bush administration for its conduct of the war on terrorism, due to both the failure to reduce the ranks of Muslim sympathizers worldwide and the deleterious effects on America’s long-term position in Asia and elsewhere. Dr. Tellis raises important questions about whether the United States has been successful in accurately identifying the terrorist threat in Asia, and, citing continuing instability in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, he is similarly ambivalent about whether the administration has crafted an effective response to radical Islam. He concludes that any successful “grand strategy to defeat terrorism” will have to entail a re-examination of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Dr. Tellis also offers a sweeping survey of, and insightful contribution to, the existing literature on terrorism. He engages important and broad debates about the “structural issues” of terrorism and how they impact policy options of the current and future U.S. administrations in waging the war on terrorism. Describing terrorism as more than a “criminal aberration” but not yet constituting the “deep structure of global politics,” he adopts a nuanced approach that accords a certain status to terrorist networks in international relations. This entails appreciating the diversity of terrorist motives, and Dr. Tellis rightly urges recognition that Al Qaeda and similar organizations, contrary to claims of their irrational or religious nihilism, do indeed operate according to an “instrumental” logic. This acknowledgement is crucial in order to craft effective policy responses to this growing threat.

This issue of the *NBR Analysis* is a longer, more detailed study of that published in the new volume *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power* (Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2004). We have decided to publish Dr. Tellis’ full study separately here for his wide-ranging contribution to analyses of terrorism, international relations of Asia, and U.S. foreign policy.

NBR is grateful to the Department of Energy, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for their support of the Strategic Asia Program, and to the Jackson Foundation for its continued generous support of the *NBR Analysis*. Special thanks are also due to Jessica Tuchman Mathews and her colleagues and staff at the Carnegie Endowment for their generous cooperation and support. The author, as always, is solely responsible for the content of this article.

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Assessing America's War on Terror: Confronting Insurgency, Cementing Primacy

Ashley J. Tellis

During the 1990s the United States and its allies enjoyed a much sought-after period of prosperity and tranquility following the end of the Cold War. In hindsight, however, it is now apparent that Al Qaeda, a fiercely anti-American global terrorist network, was taking root in over sixty countries during this period, culminating in the devastating September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. The Bush administration, which had entered office determined to secure U.S. primacy amid the emergence of major power centers in Asia, such as China, soon found itself forced to confront a worldwide Islamist insurgency. This study analyzes the relevance of terrorist groups as sub-statal actors in international politics, their influence on deeper dynamics of the international system, and the challenges facing the United States posed by transnational terrorist organizations. It argues that international terrorism, although currently salient, does not necessarily replace or even alter the traditional concerns of international politics, but rather subsists among them. On balance, the United States has managed these interlocking challenges with partial success, and needs to pay greater attention to pursuing the legitimacy and protecting the economic foundations of its power. Failing to do so, or waging a poorly defined “war against all,” carries the risk of far-reaching economic and political reverberations that may, in the not-too-distant future, enervate the United States, undermine its legitimacy as the sole superpower, and gradually erode continued American dominance in the world order.

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Introduction*

The U.S.-led war on terrorism has become the defining feature of George W. Bush's presidency. It is likely to remain, directly or indirectly, one of the central issues facing American grand strategy in Asia and beyond for at least this decade, if not longer. The United States did not seek this war. Rather, it was thrust upon an administration that, like its predecessors, came into office planning to manage more conventional problems of international politics. When George W. Bush became the 43rd president after a tightly contested election, he presided over a country that, having emerged triumphant from almost 50 years of the Cold War, hoped to enjoy a long period of tranquil security. Its principal adversary, the Soviet Union, had disappeared, and the Warsaw Pact, which had posed such a formidable military threat to the United States and its allies, was also no more. By and large, this state of affairs was judged to be both propitious and desirable. Although some analysts expressed skepticism about the stability of this new post-Cold War order, most viewed this "unipolar moment"¹ as offering the United States an unprecedented opportunity to create a durable peace that would provide order and stability globally, while permitting its citizens to enjoy the "peace dividend" that could only be dreamt about during their struggle with the Soviet Union.²

This monograph assesses the Bush administration's war on terrorism with special reference to Asia in the context of the larger geopolitical challenges facing the United States. Toward that end, it is divided into four sections. The first examines the logic of the administration's effort to consolidate American primacy, reviews the record of achievement in this regard, and examines how it shifted gears to deal with the threat of terrorism given its original interest in reorienting U.S. grand strategy to deal with the rising Asian powers of the future. The second section evaluates three conceptual issues arising out of the war on terrorism—concerns that while apparently theoretical in nature have important practical consequences for policy. The

* Dr. Tellis would like to thank Richard Ellings, Andrew Erdmann, Neil Joeck, John Judis, Daniel Markey, George Perkovich, Michael Wills, and two anonymous reviewers for suggestions and comments, Rian Jensen and Michael Beckley for research assistance, and Sara Robertson and Justin Jacobs for editing the text.

¹ Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 1 (America and the World 1990/91), pp. 23–33.

² The debate about the stability of the post-Cold War era is well covered in Graham Allison and Gregory Treverton, eds., *Rethinking America's Security: Beyond Cold War to New World Order*, New York: Norton, 1992; Brad Roberts, ed., *Order and Disorder After the Cold War*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995; Richard K. Betts, ed., *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, New York: Longman, 2002; see also Ann Markusen, ed., *America's Peace Dividend: Income Tax Reductions from the New Strategic Realities*, Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1990.

third section surveys how the United States has performed thus far in the war on terrorism in Asia. Finally, the conclusion highlights some long-term consequences of the confrontation with terrorism for America's role in the world.

The Global War on Terrorism in a Geopolitical Context

The new era of peace and prosperity that America sought as a result of the Cold War's denouement appeared to have materialized, at least on the surface, during the 1990s. Although it became clear, in retrospect, that the most dangerous transnational terrorist group ever to threaten the United States—Al Qaeda—set about organizing itself and developing roots in over 60 countries during this period, neither its activities nor the extent of the threat it posed to American security was clearly perceived by the body politic at large.³ Despite the violent previews of Al Qaeda capabilities provided through the bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa, U.S. foreign policy for much of the last decade of the twentieth century focused primarily on managing the humdrum problems of international security such as humanitarian crises, ethnic conflict, minor interstate rivalries, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict—which, although occasionally onerous, did not threaten American survival. Even the most challenging problems of this epoch seemed to comport with this rule. The Desert Storm conflict of 1990–91, the management of NATO enlargement, and the peacemaking operations in the Balkans, although closely aligned with U.S. grand strategy, did not tax American well-being and security in any fundamental way.

For the most part, the challenges facing U.S. foreign policy at this time seemed to revolve around mastering a novel reality: a global order that had survived the most remarkable power transition in modern history—the collapse of a principal pole in the international system

³ The intelligence community, however, was deeply concerned about the growth and operations of Al Qaeda throughout the 1990s, and senior CIA leaders, in their earliest briefing to then President-elect Bush, declared Al Qaeda the first important threat facing the United States. See Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004, p. 12. See also the annual testimony of Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on The Worldwide Threat, available at <www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/index.html>, and Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*, New York: Free Press, 2004. On the growth of Al Qaeda itself, see Benjamin Orbach, "Usama bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida: Origins and Doctrines," *Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 2001); Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002; Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, New York: Random House, 2002; and Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003.

without major war.⁴ In such circumstances, many policymakers and analysts hoped that the competitive world of realist international politics might somehow have been left behind. Numerous scholarly and popular articles proclaimed the obsolescence of major conflict, the transformative potential of international institutions, the promise of cooperative security and global engagement, and the diminishing relevance of alliances for advancing peace and prosperity in this new world order.⁵ In such a universe, having a good foreign and strategic policy almost bordered on the optional, as even the major challenges of the time—the rise of ethnic conflicts, state failure in peripheral countries, the prospect of major pandemics, the corrosiveness of environmental problems, and minor interstate conflicts—were viewed in the main as not radically undermining what was at last a basically peaceful international system.

Although it harbored many, sometimes deep, internal differences, the Bush administration came into office fundamentally suspicious of this liberal vision of global order.⁶ Although welcoming the unipolar moment as deeply desirable, it recognized that U.S. preeminence did not

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entail either an obliteration of competitive international politics or a suspension of “the general law of the dynamics of international relations,” namely, “the uneven growth of power among states.”⁷ Consequently, Washington could not indulge in excessive self-congratulation for having won the Cold War.

Rather, it had to confront the prospect that the unipolar moment represented just another phase in the relentless cycle of rising and falling hegemonies, and that even while American primacy was already becoming a magnet attracting dissatisfied state and non-state actors, the larger processes of economic growth, the diffusion of scientific knowledge, and the spread of dual-use and dedicated military technologies in Asia were creating new power centers like

⁴ An excellent, if still early, history of this seminal event is Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁵ See, by way of example, John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, New York: Basic Books, 1989; Carl Kaysen, “Is War Obsolete?” *International Security*, vol. 14, no. 4 (Spring 1990), pp. 42–64; Ashton B. Carter, William J. Perry, John D. Steinbruner, *A New Concept of Cooperative Security*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992; Janne E. Nolan, ed., *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994; Malcolm Chalmers, “Beyond the Alliance System: The Case for a European Security Organization,” *World Policy Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 215–230; and Gregory Flynn and David Scheffer, “Limited Collective Security,” *Foreign Policy*, vol. 80 (Fall 1990), pp. 77–101.

⁶ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2003.

⁷ Robert Gilpin, “The Theory of Hegemonic War,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 18, no. 4 (Spring 1988), p. 591.

China that could over time challenge the preeminence of the United States.⁸ These realities implied that American hegemony, far from being permanent, could turn out to be merely a transient period in the march of history if it were not carefully tended and buttressed as part of a conscious grand strategy.

Accordingly, the Bush administration's desire to cement American primacy through multiple instruments was eminently defensible. Having won the Cold War after an arduous 50-year struggle, no governing regime in Washington could reject the country's now privileged position in favor of any alternative distribution of global power. While American elites may argue among themselves about what the goals of primacy or the best ways of preserving it might be, there is no serious disagreement about the desirability of preserving U.S. preeminence in the international system. This should not be surprising because the essentially competitive nature of international politics ensures that a distribution of power favoring a particular state is unlikely to be rejected by that state, no matter what its national or ideological ideals in respect to power politics might be *ex ante*.⁹ Accordingly, it was not unexpected that U.S. national security elites, Democrat and Republican alike, settled on a policy of hegemony—that is, the expansion and consolidation of U.S. power in order to shape the international system to comport with American preferences—during the last decade of the twentieth century, once it became clear that the global distribution of power was likely to remain unipolar for some time to come. This particular strategic direction did not result from a great national debate, and so the critical question about whether the body politic would be willing to bear the costs of such a political trajectory remained unclear for a while. The attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent war on terrorism, however, seem to have provided the foundation of domestic political support for a hegemonic foreign policy.¹⁰ In any event, the Bush administration's

⁸ Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why Great Powers Will Arise," *International Security*, vol. 17, no. 4 (Spring 1993), pp. 5–51; Lawrence M. Rausch, *Asia's New High-Tech Competitors*, NSF 95–309, Arlington, Va.: National Science Foundation, 1995.

⁹ In fact, not only are states likely to reject favorable distributions of power, they are condemned to constantly seek to improve those distributions even when utterly advantageous. For a theoretical examination of this issue, see Ashley J. Tellis, *The Drive to Domination: Towards a Pure Realist Theory of Politics*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1994. For a comprehensive empirical defense of this proposition, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: Norton, 2001.

¹⁰ The last three sentences are drawn from Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons," *International Security*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Summer 2003), p. 5—but the larger argument here diverges from Posen's claim that a significant distinction exists between hegemony as a distribution of power and hegemony as a grand strategy. Although this distinction is analytically valid *a priori*, its import in policy terms is less significant because hegemonic states, understood now in terms of a distribution of power, always end up pursuing hegemonic policies, understood as a direction in grand strategy. For a theoretical examination of how this outcome ensues in anarchic politics, see Tellis, *The Drive to Domination: Towards a Pure Realist Theory of Politics*. For a study that corroborates this claim in terms of modern history, see Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

inclination to focus on cementing primacy was rooted in the first instance in the justifiable conviction that, whatever it might have meant for others, American hegemony was good, desirable, and worth pursuing, because it was beneficial for the United States.¹¹

Preserving primacy had other positive consequences as well. If neorealist theories of international politics are anything to go by, the smaller the number of poles in the international system, the more stable that system is likely to be.¹² This is because the fewer the great powers jostling for supremacy, the less complicated the challenge of maintaining stable balances in global politics. The logic of neorealist theory, then, inevitably suggests that a hegemonic system, so long as it endures, is likely to be more stable *in a structural sense* than a bipolar system, which in turn is likely to be more stable than a multipolar system, and so forth.¹³ The Bush administration's desire to bolster American primacy, however, was obviously not driven by any craving to preserve international stability in the manner understood by neorealist theory. That could only be an unintended consequence of "self-regarding" policies pursued for essentially nationalist reasons, but which can nonetheless be defensibly judged as providing both particular benefits to the United States and systemic benefits to the international community simultaneously.

The stability that U.S. preeminence provides could nourish the realm of economics as well. As political realists have always appreciated, hegemonic states have been indispensable for the creation and maintenance of stable international trading systems.¹⁴ Their preponderance of power creates an imperial order that produces "a common economic space in which goods, services, labor and capital can move relatively freely."¹⁵ Empires, whether formal or

¹¹ Despite the sometimes procrustean nature of its analysis, the history of the Bush administration's approach toward the preservation of American primacy is usefully reviewed in James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet*, New York: Viking, 2004.

¹² Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, vol. 93 (Summer 1964), pp. 881–909; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: Random House, 1979, pp. 102–193. Ironically, despite arguing this thesis systematically, Waltz does not consider unipolarity at all, because at the time of his writing bipolarity seemed largely permanent. This lacunae, however, illustrates the strongly inductive nature of most neorealist theorizing in international relations theory.

¹³ For a more comprehensive statement that blends theory with an analysis of U.S. power, see William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Summer 1999), pp. 5–41.

¹⁴ This argument was first advanced by an economist, and the locus classicus is Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–1939*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, pp. 291–308. It was incorporated most systematically into realist international relations theory in Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, where it has been a source of lively controversy since.

¹⁵ Deepal Lal, "Globalization and Order V: In Praise of Empires," p. 1, available at <www.econ.ucla.edu/Lal/busta/busta0202.pdf>.

informal, thus beget a productive economic environment because of the dominant state's ability to articulate and enforce the rules of interaction among its members by bearing whenever necessary the costs required to create and maintain an institutional infrastructure of order. As a result, imperial systems historically ended up "promot[ing] prosperity in this space by providing the essential public good of protecting the life, liberty and property of their citizens through their Pax."¹⁶ The strengthening of American primacy would assist this process in exactly the same way as the Roman and British empires did before it. Although intended primarily to advance its own interests, U.S. hegemony could be expected to drive another round of globalization that would raise worldwide levels of welfare and, in so doing, increase the wealth and prosperity of the American people itself.

The administration's objective of preserving U.S. hegemony for as long as possible by a variety of economic, military, and strategic means thus offered the promise of safeguarding specific national interests even as it produced positive externalities for the international community at large. Ideally this strategy of maintaining primacy would be prosecuted through a comprehensive effort at accumulating national power, while at the same time creating a set of international institutions and norms that, by reflecting American interests, would help minimize the cost of repeatedly applying coercive force for purposes of regime maintenance.¹⁷

Although the record of the past four years suggests that the Bush administration did not pay as much attention to building the international consensus that might have helped minimize its imperial burdens, it nonetheless understood that maintaining American dominance indefinitely would be a major, consequential task demanding considered preparation. Since it could not be an outcome that it would obtain automatically, the administration set out to preserve U.S. preponderance through a multidimensional effort that involved, *inter alia*, the following components:

- Transforming the U.S. armed forces by exploiting the revolution in military affairs and new basing arrangements to create an agile and lethal expeditionary force capable of effective global operations with the smallest possible footprint;¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For a concise statement outlining this strategy, see Richard N. Haass, "What to Do With American Primacy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 5 (September/October 1999), pp. 37–49.

¹⁸ Director, Force Transformation, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military Transformation: A Strategic Approach*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2003.

- Reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in U.S. military strategy in order to minimize the incentives of other state and non-state actors to acquire these strategic equalizers, while simultaneously working to contain the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) through a new approach that emphasized smaller nuclear forces, nonproliferation, counter-proliferation, and strategic defenses;¹⁹
- Revitalizing traditional alliances (among other ways through enlargement) to deal with both the traditional problems of international security and a range of new challenges;²⁰
- Creating new partnerships with key countries that, despite not being formal allies of the United States, would collaborate with Washington through various “coalitions of the willing” to deal with emerging threats to peace and security;²¹
- Enlarging the liberal international economic order through greater economic integration and access to new markets in order to increase national prosperity, wealth, and power through a steady outward shift of the global production possibility frontier.²²

¹⁹ J.D. Crouch, “Special Briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review,” January 9, 2002, available at <www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/usa/2002/us-020109-dod01.htm>; Remarks by the President to Students and Faculty at National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C. May 1, 2001. This effort, admittedly, is riddled with many inherent tensions. The president’s own interest in reducing the salience of nuclear weapons has been offset by bureaucratic interest on the part of U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories in preserving the prospect of developing new kinds of nuclear weapon designs. The changing character of the nuclear arsenal in some existing nuclear powers, which emphasizes deep underground shelters for protecting various assets, also increases the pressure to develop new nuclear weapons capable of interdicting these targets, even if only to preserve deterrence. Finally, the sheer political and conventional military preeminence of the United States obviously heightens the perceived value of nuclear weapons in the minds of many international competitors.

²⁰ Remarks by the President on the Enlargement of NATO, South Lawn, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/03/20040329-4.html>; Philip H. Gordon and James B. Steinberg, *NATO Enlargement: Moving Forward; Expanding the Alliance and Completing Europe’s Integration*, Brookings Institution Policy Brief, no. 90, November 2001.

²¹ Colin Powell, “Partnership and Principle,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 1 (January/February 2004), pp. 22–34. As one analyst put it, “The reshuffling of world alliances may be one of Bush’s main geopolitical legacies.” See Bruno Tertrais, “The Changing Nature of Military Alliances,” *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 135–150.

²² Robert B. Zoellick, “The WTO and New Global Trade Negotiations: What’s at Stake,” speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., October 30, 2001, available at <www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/zoellick_10.pdf>; Robert B. Zoellick, “Globalization, Trade, and Economic Security,” Remarks at the National Press Club, October 1, 2002, available at <www.ustr.gov/speech-test/zoellick/zoellick_26-npc.PDF>.

Reviewing the Record

Even before George W. Bush became president, his election campaign had abundantly indicated that a Republican administration would pay careful attention to managing the central challenge facing the United States: creating a durable preponderance capable of warding off any threats that may issue from rising powers in the future.²³ The administration's early months in office focused on slowly putting the myriad pieces detailed above into place. Some elements of this effort were truly innovative; others represented an evolution of policies pursued by previous administrations; and still others represented the fruit of enduring bureaucratic activity that survives any single president's term in office. In any event, these attempts at crafting a new grand strategy designed to buttress American primacy were violently eclipsed by the shocking events of September 11, 2001, which overnight shifted President Bush's focus on preserving world order and stability to directing a new global war against terrorism.

Over the next three years, this war would take the form of a massive campaign led by the United States and conducted by a sizable coalition of willing, reticent, and sometimes even reluctant states aimed at:

- *Defeating* terrorist organizations of global reach by attacking their sanctuaries; leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances;
- *Denying* terrorist groups sponsorship, support, and sanctuary by ensuring that states accept their responsibilities to take action against these threats within their sovereign territory;
- *Diminishing* the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit by enlisting the international community to focus its efforts and resources on the areas most at risk;
- *Defending* the United States and its allies by both protecting their homelands and extending their defenses to identify and neutralize the terrorist threat as early as possible.²⁴

²³ Condoleezza Rice, "Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (January/February 2000), pp. 45–62; Governor George W. Bush, "A Distinctly American Internationalism," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, Calif., November 19, 1999, available at <www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/wspeech.htm>; Presidential Candidate George W. Bush Speaks to the Corps of Cadets, "A Period of Consequences," The Citadel, S.C., September 23, 1999, available at <citadel.edu/r3/pao/addresses/index.shtml>.

²⁴ The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, February 2003, pp. 11–12.

The formulation of this “4D strategy” against global terrorism—defeat, deny, diminish and defend—soon found its focus in the greater South Asian region, although it quickly implicated a vast geographic space stretching from Southeast Asia through the greater Middle East and Central Asia, all the way to Europe. Given the elusive nature of the adversary, it required the comprehensive use of diplomatic, economic, military, financial, and other instruments of power such as law enforcement and intelligence, all oriented toward degrading the terrorist threat to a point where it could be returned from the arena of high politics to the domain of criminality. These multifarious efforts became so encompassing that before long the administration’s initial focus on positioning the United States to handle the challenges of global geopolitics had all but disappeared from public view, to be replaced by a new, almost pervasive, emphasis on the war on terrorism.

In reality, however, the situation was more complex. Although the rhetoric might have suggested that winning the campaign against terrorism was the sole national objective, the Bush administration prosecuted this effort even as it attempted to engage various other issues critical to preserving American primacy in an uncertain, evolving, geopolitical universe. These activities have by no means been either entirely successful, or coherent, or complete. In fact, the record of the last four years is mixed as far as building the military, political, and economic foundations for enduring hegemony are concerned: the Bush administration has been most successful in the first realm, less successful in the second, and least successful in the third.

Preserving U.S. Military Dominance

Building U.S. military capacity to sustain hegemony has been the administration’s greatest and most salient achievement as far as accumulating national power is concerned. The importance of maintaining military superiority cannot be underestimated in a competitive international system. The administration recognized early on that although the United States had by far the most powerful military forces in the world thanks to its “command of the commons,” the challenges posed by the growing relevance of new “contested zones” in Asia and beyond, combined with the growing opportunities afforded by the “revolution in military affairs,” mandated the transformation of the U.S. military in order to make it an even more effective fighting force.²⁵ The strategic objective of such a transformation was to create military capabilities “strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.”²⁶

²⁵ On the relationship between the “commons” and the “contested zones,” see Posen, “Command of the Commons,” pp. 5–46.

²⁶ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 30.

At the operational level, however, a transformation of the U.S. military was urgently needed in order to master the emerging challenges to its power projection capability, which, in the final analysis, is what distinguishes the United States as a truly global hegemon. These challenges included protecting critical bases of operation at home and abroad; defeating chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-explosive weapons and their delivery systems; prevailing in information warfare, both in offensive and defensive operations; projecting and sustaining U.S. forces in an anti-access/area-denial environment (A2/AD), and defeating A2/AD threats; denying enemies sanctuary from U.S. attack; preserving U.S. ability to operate effectively in outer space even in a competitive environment; and leveraging information technologies and innovative operational concepts to develop a truly interoperable, joint command, control, communications, computers and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) architecture.²⁷

Although there is debate about how successfully the administration's defense program has addressed these challenges in the specifics, the fact remains that the last four years have seen significant progress as witnessed, for example, in the character of the war against Iraq. As one scholar noted, during this conflict, "U.S. forces were able to go all the way to Baghdad using only half the number of troops deployed in 1991 and only one-seventh as many (but far more precise) air-launched munitions, and without a 38-day bombing campaign (as in the first Gulf War)."²⁸ Although the overall process of military transformation highlighted in *Operation Iraqi Freedom* will take decades to complete, the administration initiated the process by articulating a vision of future warfare to provide direction to transformation efforts; selecting senior military leaders based on their ability to effect transformational change, even at the risk of undermining the internal military promotion chain and damaging civil-military relations; sharply increasing military research and development funding, including investments in basic science and technology research, and new commitments to advance the revolution in military affairs, missile defense, and leap-ahead technologies like nanotechnology, biological sensors, and robotics; supporting new advanced war-fighting experiments through the creation of a Joint Forces Command that serves as the "transformation laboratory" for the military; canceling major weapons systems like the Crusader and Comanche that were judged to be a poor fit with the emerging strategic environment; and freeing up resources to create higher leverage capabilities like the DDX destroyer, the Stryker brigade, and a highly integrated "sensor-to-shooter"

²⁷ Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Defense Transformation," Testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services, April 9, 2002, p. 3.

²⁸ Robert L. Paarlberg, "Knowledge as Power: Science, Military Dominance, and U.S. Security," *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004), p. 124.

system of systems that would allow all branches of the armed services to exploit knowledge, speed, precision, and lethality in their quest to prevail quickly on the battlefield with minimal cost.²⁹

Managing Interstate Relations

The innovations summarized above will pave the way for preserving U.S. military dominance for many years to come. Exercising such power effectively, however, does not depend solely on the quality of coercive instruments, but—more importantly—on the character of leadership exercised by the United States. This represents the political foundation for the success of hegemony and, in the international arena, it manifests itself in three forms: sustaining stable political relations with key states and forging an international consensus on core issues; creating and utilizing institutions for purposes of solving global order and collective action problems; and increasing the legitimacy accruing to U.S. power and its exercise. When the administration's record in respect to these three variables is scrutinized, a variegated image emerges—but one that is not so bleak as its critics imagine.

One of the Bush administration's great accomplishments has been improving relations with all the leading states in Asia, the emerging fulcrum of power in the international system. Today, despite various disagreements, the United States is in the remarkable position of enjoying friendly ties with Japan, Russia, China, and India simultaneously. The Bush presidency successfully arrested the Clinton administration's growing indifference to the political-military partnership with Japan. It has been rare historically for the United States to have good relations with Japan and China simultaneously, yet this is true today. For the United States to have a significant military presence in South Asia while enjoying warm relations with both India and Pakistan is also unprecedented. So is the current U.S. balance, however precarious, with both Beijing and Taipei. U.S.-Russian relations too have improved markedly since the first summit meeting between President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin. These ties have become even closer after September 11, despite the new military presence of the United States in Central Asia, an area that Moscow traditionally viewed as lying within its own sphere of influence.³⁰

²⁹ Andrew Krepinevich, *The Bush Administration's Call for Defense Transformation: A Congressional Guide*, available at <www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/Archive/H.20010619.The_Bush_Administr/H.20010619.The_Bush_Administr.htm>; Michael P. Noonan and John Hillien, "The Coming Transformation of the U.S. Military," *FPRI E-Notes*, February 4, 2002; Paul Wolfowitz, "Thinking About the Imperatives of Defense Transformation," Heritage Lecture no. 831, The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., April 30, 2004.

³⁰ Robert G. Sutter, "United States: Leadership Maintained Amid Continuing Challenges," in Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2004, pp. 37–65.

If U.S. diplomatic relations with Asian states have generally been positive, Washington has lost ground in Europe, or more precisely, parts of Europe. U.S. ties with two major European partners, France and Germany, have deteriorated; this anomaly, however, has arisen not because of fundamental challenges to U.S. power but because divergent European and American attitudes with respect to the use of force came to a head in important, but specific, differences over the administration's war in Iraq.³¹ In partial recompense, however, the administration has managed to preserve good relations with the United Kingdom, (arguably) Spain, and the newly emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, although it must be acknowledged that governmental support for Washington has often come at the cost of great public resentment in these countries.³²

It can, therefore, be argued that on balance the United States has not done as badly as is often feared with respect to preserving friendly relations with the great powers: Washington has succeeded in maintaining stable political ties with key states in the most important theater of the global system, Asia, whereas its failures have been most pronounced in that arena, Europe, which is diminishing in relative importance in international politics.³³ While this précis may be accurate, it is also misleading: the European theater contains America's oldest and most reliable allies, who share common ties of history, worldview, and consanguinity. Additionally, the European states remain the largest single cluster of scientific and technological innovation outside of North America and possess various kinds of strategic resources—economic, political, military—that can be applied outside of their own immediate geographic environs. Finally, the attitudes and decisions of key European states will be critical to the success of future American efforts at maintaining a stable balance of power *in Asia* and, hence, must be cooperatively integrated into any U.S. grand strategy that aims to preserve its global hegemony.³⁴ In short, the United States cannot neglect or disregard Europe, despite its diminished

Washington has succeeded with key states in the most important theater of the global system, Asia, whereas its failures have been most pronounced in that arena, Europe, which is diminishing in relative importance.

³¹ Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, London: Atlantic Press, 2003. See also Ronald Asmus, Philip P. Everts, and Pierangelo Isernia, "Power, War, and Public Opinion," *Policy Review*, vol. 123 (February 2004), pp. 73–88.

³² Jim Lobe, "Gap Grows Between U.S., World Public Opinion," *Inter Press Service*, March 16, 2004.

³³ The implications of Europe's diminishing relevance in U.S. grand strategy, and the benefits and limits of this fact, are cogently reviewed in Francois Heisbourg, "U.S.-European relations: from lapsed alliance to new partnership?" *International Politics*, vol. 41 (2004), pp. 119–126.

³⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Geostrategy for Eurasia," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 5 (September/October 1997), pp. 50–64.

importance in a geopolitical sense, if it is to be successful across Asia (including the Middle East) over the long term. The record of the last four years suggests that there is still much work to be done in this regard.³⁵

If the administration's achievements in regard to realizing stable political relations with key powers has been a qualified success, its efforts to create an international consensus on the most important issue of the day—defeating terrorism—have been much more effective. The dreadful events of September 11 created a groundswell of international support for the United States, and although the administration reacted quite ineptly both to various offers of assistance that poured in after the Al Qaeda attacks and to NATO's interest in participating in military operations in Afghanistan, the Washington-led international consensus on the importance of defeating terrorism worldwide has survived robustly.³⁶ To be sure, most nations were, and still remain, opposed to conflating American hostility to the "axis of evil" regimes in Iraq,

Authoritarian regimes seek to exploit their new-found solidarity with the United States in the war against terrorism to destroy legitimate opposition groups within their own countries, thus sowing the seeds for future terrorism.

North Korea, and Iran with the war on terrorism, but they have, with few exceptions, been quite pragmatic in preventing whatever differences may exist on this score from undermining their desire for continued good relations with the United States.³⁷ This has certainly been the case in Asia, although less true in Europe. In Asia in fact, another quite opposite danger appears to have materialized: various authoritarian regimes now seek to exploit their new-

found solidarity with the United States in the war against terrorism to destroy legitimate opposition groups within their own countries, thus sowing the seeds for future terrorism directed both at themselves and at the United States.

Unfortunately, whatever success the administration enjoyed in creating a global consensus against terrorism has not carried over to its endeavors in Iraq.³⁸ Despite repeated efforts, most recently by President Bush at the United Nations when he called upon the international

³⁵ For an excellent survey of the challenges here, see *Renewing the Atlantic Partnership*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2004.

³⁶ Raphael Perl, *Terrorism and National Security: Issues and Trends*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Issue Brief 10119, July 6, 2004.

³⁷ Sutter, "United States: Leadership Maintained Amid Continuing Challenges."

³⁸ *A Year After Iraq War: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists*, Pew Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, March 16, 2004.

community to “do more to help build an Iraq that is secure, democratic, federal, and free,”³⁹ few countries appear to be swayed by his conviction that “a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will be a decisive blow against their [terrorists’] ambitions for that region.”⁴⁰ Even if they do believe this claim, which is almost self-evidently true, the record thus far does not support the expectation that various states, including American allies, will contribute the necessary resources to assist Washington in stabilizing Iraq. Instead, the dominant view the world over appears to be that the Iraqi crisis is one of America’s own making and, hence, does not warrant any extraordinary exertions of support. While this perception is no doubt dangerous (even if the problems in Iraq were not rooted in terrorism before, they certainly are now), the fact remains that it endures. Not only is it shared by all those countries that originally opposed the war and many that were ambivalent about the conflict, it has also infected some states that were initially U.S. partners in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. This is reflected in the recent Spanish, Honduran, and Nicaraguan defections from the original “coalition of the willing”; the continued hesitation on the part of the international community, including the United Nations, to get fully involved in post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction operations; and the reluctance to provide Iraq with the resources called for in several U.N. Security Council resolutions. Irrespective of how else these shortcomings are judged, they manifest at the very least a failure to forge the international consensus required to manage a core issue of global order that is of great current importance to the United States.

The dominant view the world over appears to be that the Iraqi crisis is one of America’s own making and, hence, does not warrant any extraordinary exertions of support.

The administration’s record with respect to creating stable political relations with key states and developing an international consensus on critical issues has thus been bimodal; its performance in regard to creating and utilizing institutions for purposes of solving global order and collective action problems has not been very different. At one level, the administration has indeed done very well, at least in areas of “high politics”: it brought to fruition NATO’s expansion with the promise of continued growth in the future; it improved, and succeeded in transforming, relations with important non-allied states such as India; and it pioneered the concept of the “coalition of the willing” so as to provide itself with the flexibility necessary to pursue U.S. interests without excessive hindrance. While the administration, therefore, deserves credit

³⁹ The White House, “President Speaks to the United Nations General Assembly,” September 21, 2004, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/09/20040921-3.html>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

for exercising its leadership to create new political arrangements that would advance the national interest in important areas, it has not done as well with respect to using those institutional structures already at hand to attain its strategic goals. In many cases, the administration all too

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quickly settled for the direct exercise of U.S. power to achieve certain outcomes, when a slightly larger investment in securing international cooperation and consensus might have eventually produced the same results with a considerably smaller expenditure of American resources.⁴¹ The opposition to NATO

participation in the war against the Taliban, the later resistance to an enhanced NATO presence through provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan, and the diplomatic negotiations with France in the UN Security Council in the months leading up to the Iraq war remain classic examples in point.

Where the administration has probably done least well in bolstering the political foundations for continued hegemony is in increasing the legitimacy of U.S. preeminence in order to deflect current and future challenges to the United States.⁴² Although the terrorist threats presently facing the country have diverse and particular causes, they remain in general a form of resistance to U.S. unipolarity. Over time, it is not unreasonable to expect that such threats will be supplemented by other kinds of opposition emanating from both established states and various transnational organizations.⁴³ One scholar, Robert Pape, has argued that if the United States were ultimately successful in Iraq, this very accomplishment would inevitably lead to “soft balancing,” which, in contrast to “traditional ‘hard’ balancing measures, such as military build-ups, alliances, or transfers of technology to American opponents,” would consist of “actions that do not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance, but that do delay, complicate, and increase the costs of using American power.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ See the most insightful remarks on this issue in James A. Baker III, “The Right Way to Change a Regime,” *The New York Times*, August 25, 2002; Henry Kissinger, “Coming Days of Judgment,” *Courier Mail* (Queensland, Australia), September 11, 2002; Henry Kissinger, “The War Option: Saddam Hussein’s Regime Poses Formidable Challenge to Bush Administration,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 11, 2002; and Brent Scowcroft, “Don’t Attack Saddam,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 15, 2002.

⁴² On the importance of legitimacy, see Kori Schake and Klaus Becher, “How America Should Lead,” *Policy Review*, vol. 114 (August/September 2002), pp. 3–18.

⁴³ For more on these issues, see G. John Ikenberry, “Illusions of Empire: Defining the New American Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 2 (March/April 2004), pp. 144–54.

⁴⁴ Robert A. Pape, “Soft Balancing: How the World Will Respond to U.S. Preventive War on Iraq,” Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice, January 20, 2003, available at <www.opctj.org/articles/robert-a-pape-university-of-chicago-02-21-2003-004443.html>.

While there is reason to be skeptical about the justifications for inevitability advanced by Pape, the concentration of power represented by the United States will no doubt attract a variety of efforts to contain it over time. This would be particularly the case if other states did not perceive American supremacy to be even inadvertently supportive of some collective international interests. If U.S. policymakers are to successfully prevent these soft or hard balancing pressures from increasing in the future, it will require special efforts to demonstrate that the preponderance of American power, while certainly good for the United States, is also beneficial—and thus desirable—for the international system as a whole.⁴⁵ Thus far, the administration's efforts have concentrated, however imperfectly, on accumulating national power rather than on seeking to legitimize it vis-à-vis an international audience. This approach to power management cannot continue indefinitely, at least not without incurring serious risks to the very objectives—consolidating U.S. primacy—that the administration has sought to preserve.⁴⁶

Where bolstering the political foundations for successful hegemony is concerned, the record suggests that the administration has done less well than it has, for example, in the area of building military strength. The bad news here is that American shortcomings are serious and must be addressed expeditiously by the Bush administration in its second term. The good news is that the problems—which have been caused in the main by failures of consultation, the conflation of particular American goals with universal problems, and the unwillingness to invest in securing an appropriate international consensus that supports U.S. objectives—can be remedied because they lie substantially within the realm of human agency as opposed to pressures of structural constraint. There are several advantages that the second Bush administration can exploit in this regard: the military, economic, and political capabilities of the United States are still overwhelming and its influence unparalleled; the international community, no matter how suspicious it may episodically be of U.S. objectives, still desires enlightened American leadership; the ideals embodied by the United States are still attractive and elicit inspiration worldwide; and the damage caused to traditional alliances can be repaired in part because U.S. allies recognize that a division within the West cannot continue indefinitely without inflicting serious damage on both sides.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ For one view of how this might be done, see G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

⁴⁶ G. John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, no. 5 (September/October 2002), pp. 44–60.

⁴⁷ William Anthony Hay, "A Preliminary Reckoning: Prospects for U.S.-European Relations After Iraq," *Watch on the West*, Foreign Policy Research Institute, April 2003.

Strengthening Economic Foundations

For the reasons elucidated above and others, repairing the political foundations for continued hegemony is possible—if the Bush administration sets its mind on the task. Strengthening the economic foundations for durable primacy over the long term, in contrast, is likely to be far more difficult because the issues that need remedying are linked as much to structural problems in the U.S. economy as they are to current economic strategy. Responsibility for the former, obviously, cannot be pinned on the Bush administration. Successive administrations, both Democrat and Republican, have presided over an American economy marked by glutinous consumption and abysmally low savings for a long time.⁴⁸ The Bush administration, to

The surprises that must be expected in the future war on terrorism make the Bush administration's decision to procure funds to deal with these contingencies primarily through emergency appropriations indefensible.

its discredit, continued the grand tradition of neglecting these problems and perhaps exacerbated them by pursuing a macroeconomic strategy that, centered on massive tax cuts coupled with runaway public spending, has ended up making the country's budget and trade deficits worse than before. To be sure, the war on terrorism has inflicted its own burdens. Combating this menace for many years to come will exact high, but as yet poorly

understood, costs on the American economy. The Congressional Budget Office, for example, recently estimated that even if current military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere are presumed to continue but at a diminishing pace, the total defense outlays over the next decade will require \$1.1 trillion in new spending beyond the administration's estimates, even if all new defense procurement is assumed to experience only historical rates of cost overruns.⁴⁹

Even if their own estimates are accurate, the surprises that must be expected in the future war on terrorism make the Bush administration's decision to procure funds to deal with these contingencies primarily through emergency appropriations indefensible. The political rationale for this choice can be readily appreciated: it helps to obscure the rapidly growing federal budget deficit, that, totaling \$422 billion in 2004, represents a record level in dollar terms. Although at 3.6 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), this deficit is still smaller than the shortfalls of the mid-1980s and early 1990s relative to the size of the economy, but it has materialized at a time when the administration has pursued a policy of unleashing

⁴⁸ Peter G. Peterson, *Running on Empty: How the Democratic and Republican Parties are Bankrupting our Future and What Americans Can Do About It*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

⁴⁹ For a more detailed discussion, see Congressional Budget Office, *The Long-Term Implications of Current Defense Plans: Detailed Update for Fiscal Year 2004*, February 2004, available at <www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/50xx/doc5017/02-12-DefenseSlides.pdf>.

major tax cuts as an omnibus solution to the nation's economic problems. As one study concluded, "the cost of enacted tax cuts is almost *three times as great* as the cost of war, even when the cost of increases in homeland security expenditures, the rebuilding after September 11, and other costs of the war on terrorism—including the action in Afghanistan—are counted as 'war costs,' along with the costs of the military operations and subsequent reconstruction in Iraq."⁵⁰ If the current tax cuts are made permanent in these circumstances, as President Bush promised in his electoral campaign, the U.S. budgetary deficits over the ten-year period 2004–2013 are likely to reach \$4.1 trillion or more depending on the estimates one accepts.⁵¹

When it was first enacted in June 2001, the administration's \$1.35 trillion tax cut over ten years was defensible as a stimulus for an economy that threatened to lapse into sluggishness. The subsequent tax cuts, however, only ended up reducing taxes on investment income, in the process preventing a shift in the tax burden from income to consumption. More problematically, the tax cuts during the last four years have been complemented by a relentless escalation in public expenditures. Whether increasing war appropriations, pork for political constituencies, subsidies for farmers, or Medicare prescription drug benefits drove this spending, the result was the same: the fiscal surplus, which stood at 2.4 percent of GDP when Bush ran for office, has been transmuted into a budget deficit that stood at 3.5 percent of GDP by fiscal year 2003 and has now risen to 3.8 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2004 by official estimates.⁵² In the near-term these deficits are unlikely to have dramatic consequences. In the longer term, however, they could produce an "upward pressure on interest rates, a crowding out of private investment, and an erosion of longer-term U.S. productivity growth,"⁵³ which would seriously undermine the objective of preserving the robust American economic capabilities necessary for the maintenance of global hegemony.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Richard Kogan, "War, Tax Cuts, and the Deficit," Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 8, 2003, p. 2.

⁵¹ Jonathan Weisman, "CBO Says, '04 Deficit Will Rise to \$477 Billion," *The Washington Post*, January 27, 2004.

⁵² Office of Management and the Budget, *Fiscal Year 2005: Mid-Session Review, Budget of the U.S. Government*, p. 1.

⁵³ Martin Mühleisen, "Overview: Returning Deficits and the Need for Fiscal Reform," in Martin Mühleisen and Christopher Towe, eds., *U.S. Fiscal Policies and Priorities for Long-Run Sustainability*, International Monetary Fund, Occasional Paper No. 227, January 7, 2004, p. 1.

⁵⁴ This threat is of particular significance because current U.S. budgetary deficits have not arisen as a result of overspending on education, technology, or social equity—investments that would bear great dividends in the future. Instead, the current deficits derive primarily from overconsumption, which does little to expand future American productivity or innovation, and as a result contributes to the weakening of U.S. competitiveness over time. See Hilton Root, "Do U.S. Deficits Threaten Global Financial Stability," *Yale Global Online*, October 13, 2004, <<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=4688>>.

A steady, unremedied increase in the fiscal deficit will cause both national saving and national investment to fall over time. A decline in either will serve to reduce future national income. As Douglas Elmendorf and Gregory Mankiw have noted: “Reduced domestic investment over a period of time will result in a smaller domestic capital stock, which in turn implies lower output and income.”⁵⁵ The consequences of falling national income for the maintenance of U.S. hegemony should be obvious. These repercussions will not manifest themselves within the next four years, but for an administration that—justifiably—cares so much about preserving U.S. hegemony, its failure to confront a core issue pertaining to the foundations of American power must be judged an inexcusable lapse. Not surprisingly, then, *The Economist*, a journal typically sympathetic to the Bush administration, was forced to conclude:

Contrary to the Bush team’s rhetoric, America does not have a small, temporary fiscal problem. It has a large and growing one. The economic consequences are indisputably negative. Big budget deficits reduce America’s already abysmally low saving rate. As the economy’s slack is worked off, Uncle Sam’s demand for dollars is likely to crowd out private investment and reduce long-term economic growth. Even if the global capital market helps out, America is already enormously reliant on foreigners to fund its spending: the current-account deficit, the measure of annual borrowing from foreigners, is at an historic high of 5.1% of GDP. Big budget deficits will aggravate these external imbalances and so raise the risk of financial volatility, even a dollar crisis.⁵⁶

As this excerpt indicates, the United States has been able to sustain its huge budget deficits thus far only because it has been “borrowing about \$540 billion per year from the rest of the world to pay for the overall deficit funding Americans’ consumption of goods and services and U.S. foreign aid transfers. This unprecedented current account deficit is paid for through direct lending and the net sales of U.S. assets to foreign businesses or persons: everything from stocks and bonds to corporations and real estate. The United States imports roughly \$4 billion of foreign capital each day, half of that to cover the current-account deficit and the other half to finance investments abroad.”⁵⁷

If it could somehow be assured that such financing would continue indefinitely, the U.S. economy would be able to continue upon its current trajectory for a long time to come. Unfortunately, that is unlikely to be the case. For starters, the United States will be faced with

⁵⁵ Douglas W. Elmendorf and N. Gregory Mankiw, “Government Debt,” National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 6470 (March 1998), p. 17.

⁵⁶ “America’s Deficits: A Flood of Red Ink,” *The Economist*, November 6, 2003.

⁵⁷ Peter G. Peterson, “Riding for a Fall,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 5 (September/October 2004), p. 117.

increasing liabilities and growing debt service burdens that, being sensitive to interest rates, will become even more onerous as these rates rise, thus leading to a greater widening of the current account deficit.⁵⁸ Further, foreign lenders at some point may simply choose to avoid accumulating more American assets or, more problematically, may be unable to continue underwriting ongoing American consumption because of their own changing demography. When a diminishing productive population has to support an ever-increasing number of dependents in countries that currently underwrite American overconsumption, it is likely that these states will increasingly allocate resources toward sustaining their own graying populations rather than continue to subsidize a vigorously expanding America that persists in consuming more than it saves.⁵⁹

Finally, the United States itself has to confront critical long-term fiscal challenges arising from the retirement of baby boomers, increases in life expectancy, and inexorably rising medical costs, which, as one analysis points out, would produce a shortfall between America's future tax revenues and future spending commitments for Social Security and Medicare that runs along the order of some \$44 trillion, or four times the nation's GDP.⁶⁰ While that point may never be reached because the United States will be compelled to cut entitlements and/or raise taxes to deal with its own aging society in the interim, an indiscriminate policy of tax cuts may mean "that America will have fewer resources to defuse . . . this long-term fiscal time-bomb."⁶¹ As an International Monetary Fund report on the U.S. economy put it succinctly, "without the cushion provided by earlier surpluses, there is less time to address these programs' underlying insolvency before government deficits and debt begin to increase unsustainably, making more urgent the need for meaningful reform."⁶²

In the interim, if the problems associated with the U.S. budgetary and current account deficits produce a loss of confidence that leads to a run on the dollar, the reverberations caused by the resulting chaos could lead to "a loss of consumer and investor confidence, a severe contraction, and ultimately a global recession"⁶³ that will make it very difficult for the United States to embark upon the adjustments required to steer its economy back on to an

⁵⁸ Catherine L. Mann, *Is the U.S. Trade Deficit Sustainable?* Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1999.

⁵⁹ See the superb discussion in Peterson, "Riding for a Fall," pp. 121–124.

⁶⁰ Jagadeesh Gokhale and Kent Smetters, *Fiscal and Generational Imbalances: New Budget Measures for New Budget Priorities*, Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 2003, pp. 23–43.

⁶¹ "America's Deficits: A Flood of Red Ink."

⁶² Martin Mühleisen, "Overview: Returning Deficits and the Need for Fiscal Reform," p. 1.

⁶³ Peterson, "Riding for a Fall," p. 119.

even course. Even the IMF, an institution not usually known to be critical of Washington, expressed its concern vividly when it noted that:

Although U.S. fiscal policy has undoubtedly provided valuable support to the global economy in recent years, large U.S. fiscal deficits also pose significant risks for the rest of the world. Simulations ... suggest that a 15 percentage point increase in the U.S. public debt ratio projected over the next decade would eventually raise real interest rates in industrial countries by an average of $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 percentage point. Higher borrowing costs abroad would mean that the adverse effects of U.S. fiscal deficits would spill over into global investment and output.

Moreover, against the background of a record-high U.S. current account deficit and a ballooning U.S. net foreign liability position, the emergence of twin fiscal and current account deficits has given rise to renewed concern. The United States is on course to increase its net external liabilities to around 40 percent of GDP within the next few years—an unprecedented level of external debt for a large industrial country

... with U.S. net external debt at record levels, an abrupt weakening of investor sentiments vis-à-vis the dollar could possibly lead to adverse consequences both domestically and abroad.⁶⁴

While the economic consequences of the current predicament are dire enough, it is their strategic implications that ought to receive most attention especially in an administration that—commendably—has focused on cementing U.S. hegemony. Peter Peterson described the stakes succinctly when he concluded that:

No one can substitute for the United States' global role. Yet the United States cannot fulfill this role without facing up realistically to its full cost. Leading nations cannot indefinitely borrow massively from those they intend to lead ... A global leader must be ready to undertake continent-wide projects requiring great patience, larger resource commitments, a public sector unburdened by excessive political promises, and an economy whose long-term prospects are unquestioned either at home or abroad. To date, unfortunately, America's elected officials leave the impression that vaunted superpower status comes with few long-term costs or responsibilities. They imply that wars can be waged without a war budget and that great debtors can set great examples.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Martin Mühleisen, "Overview: Returning Deficits and the Need for Fiscal Reform," p. 5.

⁶⁵ Peterson, "Riding for a Fall," pp. 124–125. This sentiment is strongly reinforced in Joshua S. Goldstein, *The Real Price of War: How You Pay for the War on Terror*, New York: New York University Press, 2004.

Consolidating Hegemony, Confronting Terrorism

A net assessment of the administration's efforts to consolidate and expand U.S. hegemony during its first term must therefore record mixed ratings. Although the balance sheet is not as dismal as partisan critics have alleged, the accomplishments of the Bush administration have not been realized uniformly in all areas. The military arena has witnessed the clearest successes. The achievements in the political arena, while non-trivial, are clouded by ambiguity. And neglect and failure continue to distinguish the management of the economy insofar as this is connected to the preservation of U.S. primacy over the long term. This evaluation nevertheless suggests that although weaknesses persist, the Bush administration must be given credit (despite its preoccupations with terrorism and the twin wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) for at least having appreciated the necessity of strengthening U.S. power and for initiating a series of vital and far-reaching strategic policy changes that—even if incomplete in some cases and mishandled in others—will be critical for maintaining U.S. preponderance over the long term.⁶⁶

The Bush administration has turned out to be more often than not strategically right, even when it has ended up being tactically wrong.

These strategic policy changes are significant. The Bush administration has reoriented the future nuclear posture of the United States; developed a new approach toward the global nuclear regime; accelerated the transformation of U.S. conventional military forces; organized the realignment of U.S. global military presence; continued the further enlargement of NATO; initiated various new partnerships with important non-allied states; pursued new bilateral free trading agreements; and renewed the drive to expand multilateral trade liberalization. Of course, there is much still left to be done, particularly with respect to restoring confidence in Washington's leadership and strengthening the American economy, but given the complexities of managing grand strategy in a time of crisis and structural change it would not be unreasonable to conclude, as Walter Russell Mead has, that the Bush administration has turned out to be more often than not strategically right, even when it has ended up being tactically wrong.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy*, no. 133 (November/December 2002), pp. 50–57.

⁶⁷ Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk*, New York: Knopf, 2004. Mead demonstrates in particular that key elements of Bush's approach—the focus on the Middle East, the skepticism about international organizations, and the fractures in U.S. relations with its European allies—have arisen and will survive because they reflect structural transformations in international politics.

The Bush presidency, accordingly, has remained true to its original intentions. By pursuing many strategic projects beyond the current war on terrorism, it has laid some of the material foundations for preserving the advantaged position of the United States in the geopolitical competition of the future—even if its achievements here have been clouded by continuing controversies over how U.S. power has been exercised and whether that power can be sustained because of the disjuncture between the nation’s grand strategic objectives and its economic policy. The uproar caused by differences over these issues accounts for the transient accolades and passing public attention accorded to what would otherwise be acknowledged as administration successes. This phenomenon is not hard to understand. While innovations relating to the preservation of U.S. hegemony have enduring consequences—in that they buttress U.S. safety and prosperity over the distant future—their immediate effect on the lives of ordinary Americans—although vital—is at best indirect. In contrast, U.S. actions relating directly to the war on terrorism, whatever their consequences for the global power balance over time, affect one thing that matters enormously to the body politic in the here and now: the physical safety of Americans at home and abroad.

The events of September 11, 2001, were so catalyzing precisely because they assaulted this fundamental sense of security in a way not experienced since Pearl Harbor.⁶⁸ In many ways, they were distinctly worse. Unlike Pearl Harbor, which involved a military operation directed primarily at combat targets located on a distant periphery, the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington represented an assault on civilians and on highly focal symbols deep within the metropolitan center. They also involved the use of weapons that hitherto had only routine and peaceful connotations. Finally, they were inordinately costly, brutal, and shocking to the country, being executed in front of a mass national audience in real time. September 11, then, represented a return to *experienced*—as opposed to notional—American vulnerability, a helplessness palpably felt by millions of ordinary citizens who suddenly found themselves one fall morning on the front lines of a conflict that was not supposed to have occurred in the new era of post-Cold War peace.⁶⁹

An attack of the kind represented by September 11 thus called into question the fundamental effectiveness of the social contract that supposedly governs the creation of all liberal states: the ability of the government to provide security for its citizenry. By going to the heart of

⁶⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

⁶⁹ Michael Traugott, et al., “How Americans Responded: A Study of Public Reactions to 9/11/01,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. XXXV, no. 3 (September 2002), pp. 511–516.

why states are founded in the first place, the attack resurrected the question of whether modern polities can in fact protect their citizenry in circumstances where, thanks to globalization, great destructive power is increasingly dispersed to individuals and particularly to transnational drifters. Consequently, it explains both why the Bush administration's inability to prevent the attacks of September 11 have become a matter of such controversy and why the administration's immediate response to the attacks—the global war on terrorism—would receive the kind of attention that would almost obliterate public interest in all its other successes and shortcomings connected to preserving America's geopolitical primacy over the long term.

The war on terrorism, accordingly, did not begin in a vacuum. It began, and continues, amidst the backdrop of many initiatives aimed at consolidating the preeminence of the United States in global geopolitics. It persists in an environment featuring the slow and steady rise of new power centers in different parts of the world, especially in Asia. The U.S.-led war on terrorism, then, has by no means eviscerated the larger tectonic movements in international politics. Rather, it interacts with them and may even pale in comparison with the other tectonic shifts—the changing character of state sovereignty, the continuing breakthroughs in science and technology, the socioeconomic and political disruptions caused by globalization, and the transformation associated with the information revolution—currently under way in the international system.⁷⁰ Further, just as the American campaign against terrorism finds itself embedded in a preexisting vision of what the United States should do to secure its own permanent geopolitical interests, various Asian states have also responded to the campaign against terrorism from within the context of their own specific prior interests, strategies, and geopolitical ambitions. In many cases, their own entanglements with terrorism actually predated that of the United States. Consequently, in many parts of Asia, key regional actors like Russia and India viewed the new war on terrorism as a welcome decision on the part of the United States to enter *their* own long-standing struggles with the forces of anarchy and destabilization.

Key regional actors like Russia and India viewed the new war on terrorism as a welcome decision on the part of the United States to enter their own long-standing struggles with the forces of anarchy and destabilization.

⁷⁰ See Henry A. Kissinger, "Center of Gravity Shifts in International Affairs," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 4, 2004; Ian Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999; Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane, and Stephen D. Krasner, eds., *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999; Joseph S. Nye and John D. Donahue, eds., *Governance in a Globalizing World*, Cambridge, Mass.: Visions of Governance for the 21st Century, 2000.

Dealing with New Realities

By all indicators, the great transformation, which began in the post-war period and involves the shift in global power from Europe to Asia, continues unabated. Asia remains poised to become the new strategic center of gravity in international politics.⁷¹ And the problems associated with that shift have by no means disappeared.

The continent is still confronted by the specter of consequential power and trajectory shifts among the major states. China and India continue their rapid growth in economic and power-political capacity: one study, in fact, asserts that “if things go right, . . . India’s economy, for instance, could be larger than Japan’s by 2032, and China’s larger than the U.S. by 2041 (and larger than everyone else as early as 2016).”⁷² Irrespective of whether this projection turns out to be correct in its details, the direction of the trends it highlights has been corroborated by other studies. A RAND study published in 2000, for example, predicted that China and India would become the two largest economies in Asia by 2015 when measured in 1998 purchasing power parity (PPP) U.S. dollars. Further, it noted that while China’s economic and military power would remain almost twice as large as India’s when GDP is measured in 1998 PPP U.S. dollars, these relative balances could shift in favor of India if China were to experience disrupted growth in the years ahead while the Indian economy were able to sustain even a relatively modest 5.5 percent growth rate annually.⁷³ Internal studies conducted by the U.S. intelligence community have concluded that India will become the largest non-allied, “swing state” in the international system by 2015.

Russia, in contrast, still muddles along, but the dream of recovering great power status has not died. The continuing economic constraints, the paltry levels of foreign and domestic investment, the persistent large-scale corruption and political sclerosis, and dreadful health

⁷¹ Zalmay Khalilzad and Ian O. Lesser, eds., *Sources of Conflict in the 21st Century: Regional Futures and U.S. Strategy*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1998; Frank B. Tipton, *The Rise of Asia: Economics, Society and Politics in Contemporary Asia*, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998; National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With Nongovernment Experts*, Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2000; Aaron L. Friedberg, “Introduction,” in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg, eds., *Strategic Asia 2001–02: Power and Purpose*, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2001, pp. 1–16; James F. Hoge, Jr., “A Global Power Shift in the Making,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 4 (July/August 2004), pp. 2–7.

⁷² Dominic Wilson and Roopa Purushothaman, *Dreaming With BRICs: The Path to 2050*, Goldman Sachs, Global Economics Paper No. 99, October 1, 2003, p. 3.

⁷³ Charles Wolf, Anil Bamezai, K.C. Yeh, Benjamin Zycher, *Asian Economic Trends and Their Security Implications*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2000, pp. 63–69.

and human capital indicators raise grave questions about whether Russia's recently improving economic performance will be sustainable. Military power, Russia's traditional strength, is also in decline, and its recent dismaying performance in counterterrorism operations starkly betrays the consequences of possessing armed forces that are under funded, ill-equipped, poorly trained, and plagued by low morale.⁷⁴ Although some centers of defense technology competence still survive, the Russian state is increasingly fearful about the growth of Beijing's power, concerned about the long-term security of its Far East in the face of Chinese demographic penetration, and worried about the strategic consequences of the defense supply relationship with China engendered by near-term economic necessity. What complicates matters is that Moscow is still buffeted by a deep ideological debate within its elite about the meaning of security and status, a debate that accounts for "the odd mixture of pro-Western policies, nationalist rhetoric, and strategic incoherence typical of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy from 1991–2004."⁷⁵

At long last, Japan today shows signs of economic recovery, even as consequential changes in its international political profile are under way. As Mike Mochizuki has argued, "the trauma of the 1990–91 Gulf War, uncertainties about America's security commitment in the post-Cold War era, a decade of economic stagnation, the North Korean missile tests and abduction of Japanese citizens, the rise of China, and the global threat of terrorism have all contributed to [a] new Japanese orientation," that makes Tokyo seem "more nationalistic, more willing to discuss openly and assert its national interests, and less reluctant to engage international security challenges."⁷⁶ These interests increasingly are seen to demand a comprehensive strategy that integrates both economic and political issues. Tokyo, accordingly, continues to push for regional economic integration—increasing its exports and investments in China significantly—as a check against U.S. "market fundamentalism," even as it has moved to bolster the U.S.-Japan alliance and thereby gain greater maneuverability in support of a more autonomous foreign policy in Asia and beyond.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ For a pessimistic picture of trends in Russia, see Rajan Menon, "Russia," in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg, eds., *Strategic Asia 2001–02: Power and Purpose*, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2001, pp. 173–221.

⁷⁵ Stephen E. Hanson, "Russia: Evil Empire or Strategic Partner?" in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 167.

⁷⁶ Mike Mochizuki, "Japan: Between Alliance and Autonomy," in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 104.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Finally, the Korean Peninsula still remains a region where complex opposites remain locked in a precarious balance fraught with risk. South Korea continues to remain conflicted “between remaining ‘anchored’ within the U.S. alliance framework or cutting ‘adrift’ toward a continental accommodation with China,” while North Korea in contrast exhibits sharp strategic clarity in its “objective of regime survival through economic reform *and* nuclear weapons.”⁷⁸ This antinomy could have grave implications for the future U.S. presence on the peninsula and Washington’s long-term capacity to create a Northeast Asian coalition capable of supporting its efforts at managing the rise of China. It could also lead to a variety of—mostly unpleasant—outcomes in the Korean nuclear crisis. The range of discordant outcomes here is so large, and their consequences so shattering, that it is indeed unfortunate, as one authority has concluded, that “there is as yet all too little evidence that . . . careful consideration . . . has been accorded to the alternative futures for the North Korean nuclear crisis that still lie before us—not by U.S. policy analysts, and certainly not by U.S. decision makers.”⁷⁹

Asia also remains witness to continuing transformations in leadership and elite attitudes in key countries. Japan’s political leadership is committed to transitioning out of the country’s overly pacifist restraints and making Japan “normal” again; it has already relaxed the existing legal constraints on the Japanese Self-Defense Forces participating in UN peacekeeping operations, and could pursue amending Article 9 of the Japanese constitution within the next few years. In a sharp departure from its behavior during the first Gulf War, Japan has supported the U.S.-led war on terrorism, providing logistical support in Afghanistan and dispatching non-combat troops to Iraq. Both of these actions required significant legal revisions in light of Japan’s constitutional constraints, which the Japanese leadership has undertaken despite significant popular opposition to U.S. policies in Iraq. Indeed Japan’s broader embrace of the war on terrorism has been a major component of its post-Cold War “normalization” strategy and presages a more activist role in Asia, with all its attendant complications, in the future.⁸⁰

In Beijing, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party is more determined than ever to consolidate the market revolution at home, but is struggling to assure continued political

⁷⁸ Victor Cha, “Korea: A Peninsula in Crisis and Flux,” in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 139.

⁷⁹ Nicholas Eberstadt, “Alternative Futures for the North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Scenarios, Outcomes, and Endgames,” in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 453.

⁸⁰ Eugene Matthews, “Japan’s New Nationalism,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 6 (November/December 2003), pp. 74–90.

primacy even as it becomes more rigid in respect to managing the national reunification problems of Taiwan and (secondarily) Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Continued economic growth and the Asian discomfort with what is perceived to be a singular American focus on terrorism have combined, however, to increase Beijing's confidence in its own claims regarding leadership in Asia. As Michael Swaine has pointed out, the war on terrorism has "created opportunities for China to strengthen its strategic position across most of Asia in a variety of areas (economic, political, diplomatic, military), despite the growth of U.S. military power. Moreover, such benefits have permitted China to more adroitly advance—rather than fundamentally revise or jettison—those long-term objectives of China's grand strategy that have existed since the early years of the reform era."⁸¹

The return of the Congress Party to power in New Delhi has raised new anxieties about the future pace of economic reform and the likely rate of India's ascent to great power status. Yet what seems remarkable, despite the functioning anarchy of its politics, is the country's new confidence as expressed in its claims on international respect and attention. Far from reflecting the image of a "basket case" that was common a decade ago, India today is associated with the software revolution, a successful diaspora, and nuclear weaponry. Not surprisingly Indian leaders, making common cause with other key states such as Germany, Japan, and Brazil, feel no qualms about asserting their rights to permanent membership in the most important bodies of international governance such as the UN Security Council.⁸² In contrast to India, conditions in Pakistan remain unsettled on multiple fronts. In a sharp departure from the past, however, the Pakistani president, General Pervez Musharraf, has made multiple public pledges to transform his country from a haven for radical Islamists into something that resembles a modern democracy. Thus far these commitments have not been lived up to. Pakistan's stability, accordingly, continues to be at risk and, as many Pakistani analysts have pointed out, Musharraf's campaign for "enlightened moderation"⁸³ in Islam could create more problems than it solves if his rhetoric is accompanied, as it often is, by inaction.⁸⁴

Moving beyond the Indian subcontinent, the Islamic world in general and Arab states in particular remain deeply suspicious of the United States, and while the leadership in key coun-

⁸¹ Michael D. Swaine, "China: Exploiting a Strategic Opening," in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 68.

⁸² Anwar Iqbal, "Singh to Lobby U.N. for India Council Seat," *The Washington Times*, September 3, 2004.

⁸³ Pervez Musharraf, "A Plea for Enlightened Moderation," *The Washington Post*, June 1, 2004.

⁸⁴ Najam Sethi, "Whose Enlightenment?" *Friday Times*, October 24–30, 2003.

tries has woken up to the challenges posed by radicalized Islam to their own regimes, their ability to deal with this problem satisfactorily remains uncertain. In almost every Muslim coun-

In almost every Muslim country of importance, public frustration with their system of rule is transmuted into uncontrolled anti-Israeli and/or anti-American sentiments.

try of importance, public frustration with their system of rule is transmuted into uncontrolled anti-Israeli and/or anti-American sentiments, with the ruling elites often manipulating these feelings in order to preserve their own hold on power. Shades of this problem find reflection as far away as Southeast Asia where, as Sheldon Simon laconically concluded, “U.S. public diplomacy will have to over-

come a significant deficit in Southeast Asian countries with large Muslim populations (Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Philippines, and southern Thailand).”⁸⁵

Asia continues to confront complex challenges to internal political and social stability in various subregions, continuing interstate disputes and rivalries, and the ever more progressive diffusion of military capabilities, including weapons of mass destruction. Threats to internal stability are rife in almost every subregion of the continent—Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia—defying any attempt at concise description. The challenges posed by terrorism intersect with domestic disenchantment, unresponsive internal governance, substantial economic deprivation, secessionist movements, and rapid social change to repeatedly test, and sometimes overwhelm, the capacity of state power to maintain effective control. Southeast Asia and Central Asia remain good exemplars of these problems. Simon describes the challenges in the former region succinctly:

Deterring or defending against interstate aggression is not a central security concern today for Southeast Asia. Instead, “non-traditional” threats have come from the wings to center stage ... as governments confront terrorists, criminal activity (including piracy), and secessionist movements. Since the beginning of the war on terrorism, the combination of Southeast Asia’s large Muslim population; porous and ill-defined boundaries; weak central governments; ineffective security services and rule of law; minority populations and outlying areas poorly treated by central governments; and corrupt institutions have raised concerns that the region could become a haven for organized terrorist groups.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Sheldon Simon, “Southeast Asia: Back to the Future?” in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 293.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

In Central Asia the issues are the same. Linguistic and cultural diversity intersects with politically charged separatist and irredentist demands growing out of a vast set of subnational (clan, tribal, regional, or even village) loyalties, anemic economic growth, and sclerotic political institutions, which in turn confront various former communist leaders who, quickly donning nationalist garb, have embarked on determined efforts at national consolidation in these newly independent states. In these struggles, state failure in Afghanistan produced a healthy supply of foot soldiers for various extremist opposition movements, while the war on terrorism that followed has empowered local despots to attempt neutralizing both reformist and insurgent opposition with the blessing of the United States.⁸⁷

Even as such internal strife continues to characterize large quadrants of Asia, militarized interstate disputes are commonplace as well, with China-Taiwan, North-South Korea, and India-Pakistan remaining the most obvious examples. The growth of Asian economies in recent decades has led to a substantial growth in conventional military capabilities. The Asia-Pacific region in fact remains the second-largest arms market in the world after the Middle East, having acquired more than \$150 billion worth of arms between 1990 and 2002. Some of world's biggest arms purchasers are found in this area, including Taiwan, Japan, Australia, China, South Korea, and India. Continuing economic expansion has only whetted the appetite for arms. In this context, the 1997 financial crisis appears to have imposed only a temporary slowdown on regional military expenditures. More importantly, regional military acquisitions today increasingly go beyond mere modernization. Many Asian military forces have acquired greater lethality and precision at longer ranges, improved battlefield knowledge, command and control, and increased operational maneuver and speed. These capabilities, taken together, provide the local militaries with the kernel of transformational systems that could fundamentally change their concepts and conduct of warfare over the long term.⁸⁸

While much of Asia's demand for military capabilities has been fuelled by the interaction of continuing interstate insecurity and robust economic growth, even economic failure, in some instances, has not prevented the acquisition of various kinds of weapons of mass destruction.

⁸⁷ Gregory Gleason, "Central Asia: State Building in the Face of Insurgent Islam," in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, pp. 199–225.

⁸⁸ This paragraph is based on the excellent survey in Richard A. Bitzinger, "The Asia-Pacific Arms Market: Emerging Capabilities, Emerging Concerns," Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, vol. 3, no. 2 (March 2004), pp. 1–4; see also Frances Omori and Mary A. Sommerville, eds., *Strength Through Cooperation: Military Forces in the Asian-Pacific Region*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1999.

One analyst, Gaurav Kampani, summarized the problem arrestingly:

Three out of the world's four remaining states suspected of possessing chemical weapons are in Asia, and all of the states with biological weapons programs are Asian as well. Similarly, five of the current eight nuclear weapon powers are located on the continent, which is also home to the two other countries widely suspected of pursuing nuclear weapons programs—North Korea and Iran. The intersection of mass destruction capabilities and the rise of religious extremism, political disaffection, economic disarray, and deep interstate and intrastate conflicts make Asia the most disaster-prone region in the world.⁸⁹

While most intra-Asian conflicts traditionally were rooted in power-political concerns (territorial disputes, status asymmetries, ideological contention, regime rivalry) the rapid economic growth witnessed during the last three decades has brought the competition for natural

With four-fifths of the world's oil reserves lying in politically unstable areas, resource competition could turn into open conflict at some point in the future.

resources—which in a different epoch would be viewed as a rather primitive driver of conflict—once again to center stage. As the episodic spikes in oil prices in recent years have demonstrated, continued population growth and economic expansion in Asia will levy growing demands on increasingly scarce petroleum and natural gas sources. With four-fifths of the world's oil reserves lying in politically unstable areas, resource competition could

turn into open conflict at some point in the future. This is an issue that obviously matters greatly to the United States since a substantial reason for the U.S. political and military presence in the Arab world is intimately linked both with preserving orderly flows of energy to the global economy and preventing revolutionary states from controlling energy sources and their resulting revenues. In a consequential departure from the attitudes of the past, many key Asian states now see the acquisition and protection of energy resources not simply as an economic issue but rather as a national security requirement—one they must be prepared to fight for.⁹⁰ As one scholar has described this emerging trend:

For Asia, energy is becoming a matter of “high politics” of national security and no longer just the “low politics” of domestic energy policy. Key Asian powers are responding to their growing sense of insecurity with a broad range of strategies to guarantee greater supply and price stability. These efforts are growing in scale and

⁸⁹ Gaurav Kampani, “WMD Diffusion in Asia: Heading Towards Disaster?” in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, pp. 381–382.

⁹⁰ Michael T. Klare, “The New Geography of Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 3 (May/June 2001), pp. 49–61.

scope, and they range from largely cooperative and market-oriented strategies to those that are deeply neo-mercantilist and competitive. These countries are all accelerating their efforts to gain more secure national control of overseas oil and gas supplies by taking equity stakes in overseas oil and gas fields, promoting development of new oil and gas pipelines to Asia, developing broader trade and energy ties, and following up with diplomatic ties to cement relations with the major oil and gas exporting countries.⁹¹

To summarize, the Asian landmass is characterized by a continuation of the conventional problems of international politics even as the continent writ large remains simultaneously the engine of global economic growth, the vortex of important political adjustments and sociological change, and a principal theater of the war on terrorism.

Structural Issues Raised by September 11

The September 11 attacks, which reoriented U.S. grand strategy in complex ways, also led to resurgence in terrorism studies in the United States and elsewhere. The resulting literature has been enormous and shows no signs of abating. Embedded in this discussion are three important conceptual issues that relate simultaneously to the phenomenon of terrorism, the challenges facing U.S. policy in the war on terrorism, and the intersection of terrorism and grand strategy in Asia. Each of these merits brief discussion and will be addressed in turn.

Is Terrorism a Criminal Aberration or a Continuation of Interstate Politics?

This first issue pertains to whether the kind of terrorism represented by September 11 is an aberrant problem of criminality or a new manifestation of interstate politics. In a provocative article on the sanctions debate (written before the events of September 11), John and Karl Mueller fired the first salvo by arguing that “new dangers such as those posed by ‘rogue states’ and terrorism”⁹² are relatively insignificant when viewed from the perspective of the high politics of international security. Comparing the threat posed by terrorism to the deaths caused by economic sanctions when used as instruments of state policy, the Muellers noted—correctly—that the latter are “deployed frequently, by large states rather than small ones, and may have

⁹¹ Mikkal E. Herberg, “Asia’s Energy Insecurity and the Prospects for Conflict,” in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, p. 340.

⁹² John Mueller and Karl Mueller, “Sanctions of Mass Destruction,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 3 (May/June 1999), p. 43.

contributed to more deaths during the post-Cold War era than all weapons of mass destruction throughout history.”⁹³ From this proposition, they concluded:

However dramatic terrorist attacks are, and however tragic for the innocent victims and their families, the total damage they have caused to date has been quite low and hardly constitutes grounds for panic and hysteria. On average, far fewer Americans are killed each year by terrorists than are killed by lightning, deer accidents, or peanut allergies. To call terrorism a serious threat to national security is scarcely plausible.

This is not to suggest that terrorism be ignored, of course. It is clearly an outrage that should be dealt with somehow—but more as a form of crime than a form of warfare ... Since the effects of terrorism stem less from its actual consequences than from the alarm it inspires, governments, scholars, and the media should depict terrorism for what it is—the pathetic action of the weak and desperate—instead of stoking popular fears and magnifying the destructive capabilities of terrorists to cosmic proportions.⁹⁴

Writing in the aftermath of September 11, John Mueller essentially affirmed his conclusions of a few years earlier. While admitting that the attacks in New York and Washington were “quite literally off the charts,” in that “no other single act of terrorism has ever done remotely as much damage,” he still wondered whether these events “represent[ed] a sort of historical step function—the ‘everything has changed’ point of view.”⁹⁵ Taking a contrarian perspective, Mueller held that “a case can be made that rather than foreshadowing the future, the attacks may turn out to be a statistical outlier, a kind of tragic blip in the experience of American national security.”⁹⁶ This is because the enormous destruction associated with the events of September 11 suggests that future terrorists would “find it difficult to match or top it” and, further, that the height of the psychological bar created by these attacks itself implied that future events would almost by definition have a less damaging impact. Finally, he argued that Al Qaeda itself remained a “difficult but still bounded problem” because “the numbers of terrorists and terrorist adjuncts are finite and probably manageable.”⁹⁷

Whether Mueller turns out to be right or wrong, the concerns he raises are important to our understanding of terrorism as a problem of international politics. The notion that terrorism is mainly aberrant criminal behavior and not an axial challenge to the international system hinges on at least two interrelated propositions: that the bloodshed inflicted by terrorism is modest

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 44.

⁹⁵ John Mueller, “Harbinger or Aberration?” *The National Interest*, vol. 62 (Fall 2002), p. 45.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

and will remain so in comparison to other, particularly organized, forms of violence witnessed within the international system *and* that terrorists as non-state actors will never acquire the salience that states enjoy in global politics. The truth of the latter proposition is intimately dependent on the veracity of the former because it is precisely the unmatched organizational and ideational capacity of the modern state to develop, produce, and effectively use the instruments of violence that enabled it to displace other competing entities and become the central institution in the international system.⁹⁸ Whether terrorist groups will approach states in their ability to produce highly lethal levels of violence is an empirical question; the answer will depend greatly on their size, their organizational framework and constitution, their competence in generating resources, their access to destructive technology, and their capacity for internal and external legitimation.

It may also depend importantly on context. That is, even though terrorist groups, like many other historical competitors to states before them, may not survive the long march of history to become enduring entities in international politics, they could nonetheless subsist as important players on the global scene for a significant period of time. Their resilience may not be great enough to warrant revising modern neorealist theories of international politics, but they could—despite that fact—pose great policy challenges to modern states today for at least three reasons.

First, if the history of international politics is in fact an iterative sequence of struggles for hegemony in the world system,⁹⁹ then terrorist groups as a class of sub-statal actors are likely to increase in prominence during what Colin Gray has called its “inter-war” periods.¹⁰⁰ This is because the absence of hegemonic competition often results in an erosion of the discipline imposed by acute interstate rivalry, thus enabling otherwise peripheral entities to arise and make their presence felt in the international system. If the current historical epoch is in fact just another such interregnum between recurring hegemonic struggles, the presence of potent

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⁹⁸ Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London: Verso, 1984; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990*, Cambridge, Mass.: B. Blackwell, 1990.

⁹⁹ George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987; A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics*, New York: Knopf, 1958; A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980; Robert Gilpin, *Change and War in World Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

¹⁰⁰ Colin S. Gray, “Combating Terrorism,” *Parameters*, vol. 23 (Autumn 1993), pp. 17–23.

terrorist groups will have to be treated as a significant, even if only transient, factor in international political life—but one that may demand a forceful response on the part of the currently dominant state(s).¹⁰¹

Second, the rise of terrorist groups as sub-statal actors will become increasingly relevant as instruments of resistance to unipolarity. Standard neorealist theories of international politics starkly posit balancing as the automatic response to threatening asymmetries of power.¹⁰² These models, however, are too abstract and too imprecise to capture the complexity of international behaviors in practice, which vary tremendously depending on whether state or non-state actors are involved. Even in a universe where states alone are the units of action, the question of whether some entities will choose to balance as a response to asymmetric power will depend on the perceived differentials in relative capability, durability of relative power differences, availability of allies or other backup courses of action, length of decision horizons, and the character of hegemonic behavior.¹⁰³ When faced with the prospect of robust U.S. hegemony today, balancing (both internal and external) may turn out to be neither feasible nor settled, at least for now. In such circumstances, strategies of resistance, which involve actions that seek to loosen, undercut, block, or raise the costs accruing to the exercise of American power, or strategies of engagement, which entail building cooperative ties in the hope of influencing how American power is exercised, become useful, albeit weaker, alternatives.¹⁰⁴ For entities threatened by U.S. hegemony, or by its national surrogates, or by its larger political values, strategies of resistance must appear as an attractive course of action, with terrorism,

¹⁰¹ As Andrew J. Bacevich comments disapprovingly, “The result has been a spectacular outburst of military activism—not campaigns and battles, but myriad experiments in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement; the repeated use or threatened use of air power to warn, coerce or punish; and the employment of armed forces to bolster economic sanctions or to respond to anarchy, natural disaster and social disintegration.” See Andrew J. Bacevich, “Policing Utopia: The Military Imperatives of Globalization,” *The National Interest*, vol. 56 (Summer 1999), pp. 5–13. In a previous era, Great Britain confronted a similar task, policing various rebellions and bushfire wars in the period after 1815, after it had secured the foundations of its second empire. See Byron Farwell, *Queen Victoria’s Little Wars*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

¹⁰² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 102–128.

¹⁰³ Precisely because balancing may not be inevitable or successful, great powers throughout history have managed to create a series of empires. Both the recurring drive toward imperial expansion and the persistence of success, however transient, suggest that the equilibrium (systemic) outcome in any “anarchic” system is not balancing, as neorealist theory argues, but the drive to domination—which can be successful depending on how cleverly the hegemon is able to exploit the collective action problems that necessarily afflict any effort at balancing. For an extended theoretical discussion of this dynamic, see Tellis, *The Drive to Domination: Towards a Pure Realist Theory of Politics*.

¹⁰⁴ G. John Ikenberry, *Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence: Great Power Politics in the Age of Unipolarity*, National Intelligence Council, July 28, 2003.

whether state-sponsored or independent, likely to be viewed as an effective “strategic choice”¹⁰⁵ for this purpose. The utility of terrorism in this context derives especially from its ability to levy potentially unacceptable harm on the superpower; acutely threaten its credibility with respect to population protection; reduce the imbalance of power between state and non-state insurgents; and preserve the latter’s deniability if required to escape punishment.¹⁰⁶

Third, the relevance of terrorist groups as international political actors today is fundamentally nourished by diverse features of the current world system: globalization, the continuing linkages of terrorist groups with existing states, and the exploitable resentments resulting from various superpower actions aimed at maintaining a global regime.¹⁰⁷ Transnational terrorist groups today draw their sustenance and effectiveness from the increasingly free flow of people, goods, capital, and ideas across borders. This phenomenon of globalization, which permits relatively effortless production and distribution on an international scale and which rivals traditional organizations like the state as a mechanism for diffusing wealth and prosperity, also allows labor, finance, and technology to collaborate surreptitiously but efficiently in support of terrorism worldwide. This *structural* feature of the modern international system only gains in effectiveness if it receives support from established states, as it often does when state challengers choose to confront either rivals or a hegemonic power through clandestine violence. And, finally, one of the arteries of globalization itself—modern communications—enables terrorist groups to mitigate more effectively the age-old problems of collective action that bedevil all efforts at political resistance.¹⁰⁸

Transnational terrorist groups today draw their sustenance and effectiveness from the increasingly free flow of people, goods, capital, and ideas across borders.

These reasons taken together suggest that terrorism today, *pace* Mueller, arguably goes beyond criminality to acquire the status of a significant problem in, although perhaps not a

¹⁰⁵ Martha Crenshaw, “The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice,” in Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 1990.

¹⁰⁶ Richard K. Betts, “The Soft Underbelly of American Primacy: Tactical Advantages of Terror,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 117, no. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 19–36.

¹⁰⁷ Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism,” *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 3 (Winter 2002/2003), pp. 30–58; Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, “A Parallel Globalization of Terror: 9/11, Security and Globalization,” *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 37, no. 3 (September 2002), pp. 323–349.

¹⁰⁸ For a useful overview of the collective action issues implicated in terrorism, see Anthony Oberschall, “Explaining Terrorism: The Contribution of Collective Action Theory,” *Sociological Theory*, vol. 22, no. 1 (March 2004), pp. 26–37.

permanent feature of, international politics. At a superficial level, terrorism may be counted as a serious challenge to international security simply because it threatens the superpower of the day, the United States. To paraphrase Kenneth Waltz, “a problem becomes serious if we treat it like one.”¹⁰⁹ The issue of terrorism currently, however, goes beyond the question of a great power’s ability to create new realities through its obsessions and actions. Rather, the present pause in superpower competition, terrorism’s utility as an instrument of resistance to unipolarity, and its ability to exploit globalization and subaltern resentments in new ways, all combine to give it a significance that makes it a structural, even if eventually transient, feature of the international politics of our time.

This, in effect, implies that terrorism *is* an important challenge and a threat, but that it does not yet undermine the “deep structure”¹¹⁰ of global politics. The problem of terrorism, even of the onerous Al Qaeda variety, thus, falls into a middling category: it is something more than superficial but less than a profound restructuring of the international system. Although its rhetoric may suggest otherwise, the actions of the Bush administration since 2001 indicate that it has appreciated this fact. Because the fundamental geopolitical challenges facing the United States over the long term remain threats of the traditional type—the rise of major challengers and the prospect of grievous interstate conflict—the administration’s bearing both before *and* after September 11 has indeed mirrored this insight. As a result, its efforts during this period have been oriented toward simultaneously preparing for potential rising challengers of the future while fighting the immediate battles precipitated by its confrontation with terrorism.

Whether the administration has succeeded in this endeavor is a different question. But the fact remains that its initiatives post-September 11, including, for example, the new global basing strategy, clearly indicate that it has internalized the importance of preparing for future power struggles and emerging challenges to regional stability even as it struggles to master the threat of terrorism.¹¹¹ To prosecute this Janus-faced task effectively, the administration admittedly has had to adjust its original exclusively state-centric view of the world, but it has done so silently, reorienting, not abandoning, its underlying grand strategy. What it may have done less well—and subsequent discussion will explore this further—is to appreciate the relationship between its confrontation with terror and the longer-term challenge of maintaining U.S. primacy against

¹⁰⁹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 130.

¹¹⁰ This phrase is used in the sense popularized by John Gerard Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,” in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 135.

¹¹¹ “Defense Department Background Briefing on Global Posture Review,” August 16, 2004, News Transcript, available at <<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2004/tr20040816-1153.html>>.

possible future challengers, or, to put it more precisely, how its conduct of the war on terrorism could undermine the objective of maintaining durable U.S. hegemony over time.

In any event, the rise of terrorism as a nontrivial problem in international politics implies new challenges for the exercise of national power in that the United States, like many other countries, is now faced with the challenge of managing security with respect to both sub-statal and state actors simultaneously. International political struggles have by no means been put on hold; rather, they continue amidst ongoing sub-statal challenges to security. Consequently the current world of international relations puts a premium on “smart responses,” that is, effectively defeating sub-statal threats without compromising one’s ability to deal with the conventional challenges of interstate politics both now and over the long term.

Is the “New” Terrorism Really New?

The second issue arising from the burgeoning literature on terrorism is the assertion that September 11 represents the apotheosis of “a new form of terrorism focused on millennial visions of apocalypse and mass casualties.”¹¹² If this is true, it raises the twin questions of how the “new” terrorism differs from the “old” and whether the new terrorism is in fact truly “new.”¹¹³

Steven Simon succinctly summarized the dimensions of the new terrorism when he stated:

In the minds of the men who carried them out, the attacks of September 11 were acts of religious devotion—a form of worship, conducted in God’s name and in accordance with his wishes ... That religious motivation, colored by a messianism and in some cases an apocalyptic vision of the future, distinguishes al-Qaida and its affiliates from conventional terrorist groups such as the Irish Republican Army, the Red Brigades, or even the Palestine Liberation Organization. Although secular political interests help drive al-Qaida’s struggle for power, these interests are understood and expressed in religious terms ...

¹¹² Matthew J. Morgan, “The Origins of the New Terrorism,” *Parameters*, vol. 34, no. 1 (Spring 2004), p. 29.

¹¹³ For the differing views on this issue, see Thomas Robbins, “Destroying the World to Save It: Aum Shinrikyo, Apocalyptic Violence, and the New Global Terrorism,” *Nova Religio*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1999), pp. 361–362; Mark Juergensmeyer, “Understanding the New Terrorism,” *Current History*, no. 99 (April, 2000), pp. 158–163; Murat Karagöz, “September 11: A New Type of Terrorism,” *Perceptions*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2002), pp. 140–167; Peter Chalk, “Grave New World: the United States may be Overrating the Threat of Terrorism, which Remains a Weapon of the Weak,” *Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 13–20; Isabelle Duyvesteyn, “How New Is the New Terrorism?” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 27, no. 5 (2004), pp. 439–454; and, David Tucker, “What is New about the New Terrorism and How Dangerous is It?” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 13, no. 3 (2001), pp. 1–14.

The explicitly religious character of the “New Terrorism” poses a profound security challenge for the United States. The social, economic, and political conditions in the Arab and broader Islamic world that have helped give rise to al-Qaida will not be easily changed. The maximalist demands of the new terrorists obviate dialogue or negotiation. Traditional strategies of deterrence by retaliation are unlikely to work because the jihadists have no territory to hold at risk, seek sacrifice, and court Western attacks that will validate their claims about Western hostility to Islam.¹¹⁴

Similarly, Ian Lesser, while accepting the distinctiveness of the new terrorists in terms of their apocalyptic ideology, broadened the conception to include organizational structures when he noted that:

The old image of a professional terrorist motivated by ideology or the desire for “national liberation,” operating according to a specific political agenda, armed with guns and bombs, and backed by overt state sponsors, has not quite disappeared. It has been augmented—some would say overtaken—by other forms of terrorism. This new terrorism has different motives, different actors, different sponsors, and ... demonstrably greater lethality. Terrorists are organizing themselves in new, less hierarchical structures and using “amateurs” to a far greater extent than in the past.¹¹⁵

These qualitative changes in the forms of terrorism over the years have led many scholars to think of the newest iterations in larger, macroscopic terms. David Rapoport, for instance, has suggested that religiously motivated terrorism represents the “fourth wave” in the evolution of terrorism, following the terrorist movements associated successively first with the breakup of the European empires, then decolonization, and finally anti-Westernism.¹¹⁶ Nadine Gurr and Benjamin Cole have labeled the threat of WMD use associated with the new terrorism as the “third wave of vulnerability” experienced by the United States, after the two earlier waves associated with the Soviet nuclear test of 1949 and the escalating nuclear arms race that followed.¹¹⁷

Since most commentators believe that the terrorism represented by Al Qaeda and its acolytes is in fact new, but often conflate the various facets of novelty, it is useful to analyze the

¹¹⁴ Steven Simon, “The New Terrorism: Securing the Nation Against a Messianic Foe,” *Brookings Review*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 18–24.

¹¹⁵ Ian O. Lesser, “Introduction,” in Ian O. Lesser, et al., *Countering the New Terrorism*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1999, pp. 1–2.

¹¹⁶ David C. Rapoport, “The Fourth Wave: September 11 and the History of Terrorism,” *Current History*, vol. 100, no. 650 (December 2001), pp. 419–424.

¹¹⁷ Nadine Gurr and Benjamin Cole, *The New Face of Terrorism: Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002.

new terrorism by decomposing its different elements: objectives and motivations, organizational structure, and modus operandi.

Most scholars agree that whatever the specific goals of traditional terrorist movements may have been, their overarching objective invariably consisted of either advancing a political cause or drawing attention to popular distress *without* killing large numbers of people. The violence inflicted by traditional terrorism was meant to service particular political interests and as a result was kept deliberately limited since it was important not to alienate the larger body of potential sympathizers. Brian Jenkins summarized this view succinctly when he asserted “terrorists want a lot of people watching and listening, and not a lot of people dead.”¹¹⁸ In contrast, many analysts argue that the most distinguishing characteristic of the new terrorism is its willingness to inflict mass death as an end in itself. Matthew Levitt articulated this idea well when he averred that “September 11 has ushered in a new era, in which the most devastating terrorism is not a way to convey a message—it *is* the message.”¹¹⁹ The National Commission on Terrorism concurred when it concluded that fanaticism rather than interests has resulted in new terrorist groups having no “concrete political goal other than to punish their enemies by killing as many of them as possible, seemingly without concern about alienating sympathizers.”¹²⁰ R. James Woolsey confirmed this perception most colorfully when he stated, “today’s terrorists don’t want a seat at the table, they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it.”¹²¹

The most distinguishing characteristic of the new terrorism is its willingness to inflict mass death as an end in itself.

This shift from instrumentally rational attention-seeking to an apocalyptic interest in causing mass death is often viewed as connected with Islamic extremism. The savagery of September 11 strengthened this image, but it is in fact likely that the terrorism of Al Qaeda had strategic, even if utterly violent, objectives. The right-wing fanatics associated with the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995, Christian Identity groups, and other violent ultraconservative fundamentalist groups in the United States are similar in this sense, although they are decidedly not Islamic in confession. Other religious groups, such as the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo and the numerous cults

¹¹⁸ Brian Michael Jenkins, “International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict,” in David Carlton and Carlo Shaerf, eds., *International Terrorism and World Security*, London: Croom Helm, 1975, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ Matthew A. Levitt, “War on Terrorism Scorecard,” *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer 2002), p. 39.

¹²⁰ National Commission on Terrorism, *Countering the Changing Threat of International Terrorism*, Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 2000, p. 3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

enamored of violence elsewhere in the world seem to reflect the apocalyptic nature of the new terrorism much better insofar as they betray simultaneously an obsession with righteous killing-as-healing, total social destruction as necessary for purification, a quest for weapons of mass destruction, and a cult of personality revolving around a charismatic leader.¹²²

If the objectives and ideational motivations of the new terrorism are defined in terms of the willingness to inflict mass death for varied reasons ranging from the political to the apocalyptic, the more amorphous organizational character of the new terrorist groups is seen as the second defining contrast between the new and the old terrorism. The conventional wisdom is that the old terrorist groups were hierarchically structured command organizations with identifiable leaders. These groups essentially operated in the manner of conventional militaries, where leaders at the apex, responsible for identifying, integrating, and coordinating the different tasks relating to combat, training, communications, transportation, information, and supervision, essentially made the key decisions in respect to the use of force, while foot soldiers in the various cells (which were designed more for purposes of operational security than anything else) executed these orders after appropriate coordination with the leadership and other corresponding units.¹²³

Many scholars today have concluded that the new terrorist groups, in contrast, have superior operating practices in that they appear highly horizontal, are less command driven, and make extensive use of amateurs. Arquilla, Ronfeldt, and Zanni at RAND have argued that new terrorist groups “sometimes appear acephalous (headless) and at other times polycephalous (Hydra-headed),”¹²⁴ operating in a fashion more akin to the *Auftragstaktik* of German maneuver warfare than the heavily scripted British and French campaign planning of the Second World War. As Arquilla and his colleagues emphasize, the new terrorist groups now consist of “dispersed small groups who communicate, coordinate, and conduct their campaigns in an internettted manner, without a precise central command.”¹²⁵ In this structure,

the capacity ... for effective performance over time may depend on the presence of shared principles, interests, and goals—at best, an overarching doctrine or ideology—that spans all nodes and to which the members wholeheartedly subscribe. Such a set

¹²² Robert J. Lifton, *Destroying the World to Save It: Aum Shinrikyo, Apocalyptic Violence, and the New Global Terrorism*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 1999.

¹²³ Bard E. O’Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Washington, D.C.: Maxwell Macmillan Inc., 1990, p. 91 ff.

¹²⁴ John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini, “Networks, Netwar, and Information-Age Terrorism,” in Ian O. Lesser, et al., *Countering the New Terrorism*, p. 51.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

of principles, shaped through mutual consultation and consensus-building, can enable them to be “all of one mind,” even though they are dispersed and devoted to different tasks.¹²⁶

That new terrorist groups make extensive use of amateurs and operate in accordance with a vision of “leaderless resistance” is not accidental. It was in fact articulated by the American extreme right ideologue Louis Beam, who argued that hierarchy ought to be replaced by a network of “phantom cells” of disaffected citizenry, thus allowing tactical offensive flexibility while protecting security of the resistance as a whole.

Utilizing the leaderless resistance concept, all individuals in groups operate independently of each other, and never report to a central headquarters or single leader for directional instruction ... Participants in a program of leaderless resistance through phantom cell or individual action, must know exactly what they are doing and exactly how to do it ... All members of phantom cells or individuals, will tend to react to objective events in the same way through usual tactics of resistance ... No one need issue an order to anyone.¹²⁷

According to many analysts, the third dimension of distinctiveness between the old and new terrorism lies in the *modus operandi* that characterizes these two generations of disorder. The old terrorism in this view subsisted essentially within the interstices of traditional international politics. The international system was defined predominantly, if not entirely, by states, and sub-statal entities like terrorist groups that used conventional military instruments in what were largely improvised, episodic, localized, and ultimately marginal attacks against state interests. Against this model of activity, the new terrorism, as represented by the September 11 attacks, is seen less as a transient and marginal activity and more as “a new kind of warfare” that Bruce Berkowitz has labeled “strategic terrorism.”¹²⁸

Berkowitz argues that the *modus operandi* of strategic terrorism consists of four components:

- A global network consisting of small, semi-autonomous cells capable of operating with little centralized control to achieve the strategic goals of the parent organization;
- The use of unconventional weapons of mass destruction (e.g., hijacked airliners) to cause huge casualties, enormous physical damage, and to attract publicity;

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

¹²⁷ Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, vol. 12 (February 1992), available at <www.louisbeam.com/leaderless.html>.

¹²⁸ Bruce Berkowitz, “Intelligence and the War on Terrorism,” *Orbis*, vol. 46, no. 2 (2002), p. 289.

- An alliance between the terrorist network and one or more authoritarian nation-states (e.g., Afghanistan and possibly Iraq) that provide the network with logistics and funding for its non-attributable army;
- Information superiority, in both its “soft” (an alluring ideological message to recruit and motivate foot soldiers) and “hard” (secure global communications for logistics, financial support, and command and control) forms.¹²⁹

What makes the new strategic terrorism deadly is its ability to exploit characteristics of globalization to inflict unprecedented costs on the modern state. As Berkowitz notes in his discussion of September 11, “no other single-day attack on the American homeland has been so costly,”¹³⁰ a conclusion that holds even when that gruesome event is compared with the Battle of Antietam and Pearl Harbor. The economic costs of the attack were equally vast, with airline bailouts costing \$15 billion, insurance expenses totaling over \$40 billion, and New York City alone losing \$83 billion in lost output and jobs.¹³¹

Consistent with Berkowitz, several analysts including Martin van Creveld,¹³² Ralph Peters,¹³³ Franklin Spinney,¹³⁴ Robert Kaplan,¹³⁵ and Richard H. Schultz and Andreas Vogt,¹³⁶ have argued that strategic terrorism represents less terrorism and more “fourth generation warfare.” The first generation of war had been characterized by the era of the smoothbore musket and the tactics of line and column as used in the *levee en mass* perfected by Napoleon. The second generation was distinguished by the rifled musket, breechloaders, barbed wire, the machine gun, and indirect fire with tactics based on fire and movement, but which were essentially linear and exploited attrition, as witnessed in World War I. Third generation warfare was based on nonlinear maneuver tactics, introduced by Germany in World War II, with attacks relying on penetration to bypass the enemy’s combat forces rather than seeking to

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 290.

¹³¹ Ibid.; Insurance Information Institute, “9/11 and Insurance, One Year Later—Terror Attacks Most Complex Disaster in History,” Press Release, September 5, 2002.

¹³² Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, New York: Free Press, 1991.

¹³³ Ralph Peters, *Beyond Baghdad: Postmodern War and Peace*, Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2003.

¹³⁴ Frank Spinney’s work, and that of others in a similar vein, is collected at his excellent website, *Defense and the National Interest*, available at <www.d-n-i.net/index.html>.

¹³⁵ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, New York: Vintage Books, 2001.

¹³⁶ Richard H. Schultz and Andreas Vogt, “It’s War! Fighting Post-11 September Global Terrorism through a Doctrine of Preemption,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 1–30.

close in with and destroy them.¹³⁷ The fourth generation, in contrast to the three previous iterations, consists of, in van Crevald's words, a "post modern transformation of war," wherein "national sovereignties are being undermined by organizations that refuse to recognize the state's monopoly over violence," thus resulting in a situation where "as war between states exits through one side of history's revolving door, low-intensity conflict among different organizations will enter through the other."¹³⁸

This view of terrorism as fourth generation war underscores the claim of the distinctiveness of the new terrorism in a most dramatic way. Not only has terrorism gone beyond criminality in this view, it has also gone beyond merely materializing as a new phenomenon in international relations. Rather, it abides at the very core of the international system, representing a revolutionary transformation of how war itself—the ultimate ordering instrument in international politics—is waged and won. As Schultz and Vogt summarize, terrorism as fourth generation warfare is highly irregular, unconventional, and decentralized; utilizes asymmetrical operations to bypass the static superiority of the nation-state and to attack a variety of national targets to demoralize the will of both population and government; exploits deception, denial, and stealth to infiltrate and blend into target populations; employs all manner of information-age technologies to organize and execute mass-casualty attacks, including through the use of WMD, in a war that renders old distinctions between military and civilian irrelevant; remains a remorseless enemy of the state it challenges; and survives largely immune to that state's most modern conventional weaponry.¹³⁹ The most important characteristic of the new terrorism as fourth-generation warfare, therefore, is that it can undermine the traditional state at minimal cost, yet remain largely impervious to the best conventional military instruments that the state can muster against it. In the face of such an adversary, Schultz and Vogt conclude, not only is a new strategy of war-fighting required, but also and "out of necessity, force must be used to preempt terrorists and those states that harbor and provide them with the means of war and terror."¹⁴⁰

The most important characteristic of the new terrorism as fourth-generation warfare is that it can undermine the traditional state at minimal cost, yet remain largely impervious to the best conventional military instruments that the state can muster against it.

¹³⁷ William S. Lind, et al., "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation," *Marine Corps Gazette*, vol. 73, no. 10, October 1989, pp. 22–26.

¹³⁸ Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, p. 224.

¹³⁹ Schultz and Vogt, "It's War! Fighting Post-11 September Global Terrorism Through a Doctrine of Preemption," pp. 6–7.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

These three broad characterizations about the radical distinctiveness of the “new terrorism” have not gone unchallenged. There is a growing literature on this issue, but as yet no consensus. The analysis of the objectives of the new terrorism, for example, highlights the apocalyptic strains now emerging in some terrorist groups, but it is by no means obvious that this variant either represents the wave of the future or even supercedes the more traditional terrorist motivations. It is also unclear whether Al Qaeda represents an exemplar in this regard. A compelling case can be made that, at least as far as objectives go, Al Qaeda remains a form of old terrorism insofar as its political energies are directed toward securing regime change in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan, while administering retribution on their principal protector, the United States.¹⁴¹

This is obviously a complex issue because, in the case of Al Qaeda, conventional political goals like regime change remain interwoven with other elements such as the desire to purify Islam, an animosity toward the West and the United States in particular, and a yearning for justice that manifests itself in the advocacy of specific sociopolitical solutions. If the organization’s conventional political goals are taken seriously however, Al Qaeda’s objectives appear to be about as instrumental as any traditional revolutionary group.¹⁴² This perception is corroborated by the fact that Osama bin Laden’s statements justifying the choice of target and providing ethical rationalizations for the recourse to violence accompany almost every major Al Qaeda attack. The instrumentality underlying such behavior was underscored further when bin Laden, in an audiotape on April 15, 2004, extended a truce to various European nations with forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other Muslim states if they were to withdraw their troops from these countries. Whether or not this offer was sincere, it suggested not an apocalyptic vision but a demonstration of means-ends rationality in the service of conventional political objectives, which consisted of ejecting Western military presence from the Muslim world by cleverly seeking to “drive a wedge between the United States and its allies, playing on fears among Western publics that their governments’ pro-U.S. policies are placing them at greater risk.”¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ In his “Letter to America,” for example, Osama bin Laden states, “We call upon you to end your support of the corrupt leaders in our countries. Do not interfere in our politics and method of education. Leave us alone, or else expect us in New York and Washington.” Available online at <observer.guardian.co.uk/worldview/story/0,11581,845725,00.html>.

¹⁴² For an interesting examination of this issue, see Michael Doran, “The Pragmatic Fanaticism of Al Qaeda: An Anatomy of Extremism in Middle East Politics,” *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 117, no. 2 (Summer 2002), pp. 177–190.

¹⁴³ “Analysis: Bin Laden Plays Divide and Rule,” available at <www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/04/15/binladen.tape.analysis.reut/>.

Where Al Qaeda seems to differ from the old terrorism is in its willingness to apply more than token violence and in its large-scale use of suicide attacks. Neither of these characteristics, however, is conclusive evidence that its motivations are religious rather than strategic, even if all its actions are expressed in spiritual idioms for purposes of comprehensibility and legitimacy in the Muslim world. The objective of inflicting mass casualties, for instance, may simply reflect a cold-blooded calculation about what it takes to punish a powerful country such as the United States for persisting with those policies that are anathema to Al Qaeda, while the use of suicide attacks, far from suggesting any other-worldly irrationality, actually represents a chilling strategy of coercion designed “to compel a target government to change policy.”¹⁴⁴ As Robert Pape noted, “The central logic of this strategy is simple: Suicide terrorism attempts to inflict enough pain on the opposing society to overwhelm their interest in resisting the terrorists’ demands and, so, to cause either the government to concede or the population to revolt against the government.”¹⁴⁵

Appreciating Al Qaeda’s motivations and its objectives correctly has more than academic significance. It goes to the heart of what kinds of policy responses are essential to neutralize this threat. An effective terrorist organization, whose operations are characterized by instrumental rationality and that seeks the attainment of specific world-historical goals, may be difficult to defeat in practice, but at least represents a tractable problem in principle. Terrorist groups motivated by truly transcendent impulses and seeking radically solipsistic aims, in contrast, pose a more difficult challenge insofar as they cannot be placated through any conventional political solutions.¹⁴⁶

Treating the new terrorism as a collective that lies outside the realm of instrumental reason and strategic choice, therefore, has problematic conceptual and practical consequences. Accordingly, Walter Laqueur wisely counsels against dramatic characterizations of what is a multifaceted phenomenon, noting that there are in fact “many terrorisms,” each with its own approach and distinctiveness.¹⁴⁷ In this context, it may be more helpful from a policy perspective to order terrorist groups along a multivariate spectrum identified by whether the group

¹⁴⁴ Robert A. Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 3 (August 2003), p. 346.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ As Audrey Kurth Cronin cautions in her study of terrorism and suicide attacks, “... suicide attackers generally make choices and are not impulsive or ‘crazy.’ They are usually carefully recruited, indoctrinated and then targeted by organizations. It is important, therefore, to concentrate on analyzing the culture and structure of the organization when fashioning a response.” See Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Terrorists and Suicide Attacks,” *CRS Report for Congress*, August 28, 2003, p. i.

¹⁴⁷ Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century*, New York: Continuum, 2003.

pursues worldly or apocalyptic goals, employs limited or unlimited violence, and seeks ends that are legitimate (and thus lend themselves to appeasement) or desires outcomes that lie beyond the capacity of their targets to satisfy. If such a framework is applied to the “new terrorism,” it may be possible to appreciate—as Martha Crenshaw argues we should—that “terrorism poses different types and magnitudes of threat . . . according to its purpose and context. Rather than a single monolithic ‘terrorism’ or even a relatively bounded ‘terrorism with global reach,’ there are multiple terrorisms with distinctive logics. Terrorism is a method that serves different ideologies, and its forms are diverse.”¹⁴⁸

The assertion that the organizational structures underlying the new terrorism are distinctive has also been similarly critiqued. Henner Hess points out that even older terrorist groups like the Red Brigades were far less hierarchical than the received wisdom supposes,¹⁴⁹ and David Tucker observes that even the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Red Army Faction of the Baader-Meinhof Gang were far more “networked” than is commonly appreciated.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, even if networking is in fact a definitive organizing characteristic of the new terrorism, that by itself does not indicate operational superiority. As the radical ideologue Louis Beam conceded, “. . . it must be kept in mind that leaderless resistance is a *child of necessity*” (italics added).¹⁵¹ Tucker concludes, therefore, “adopting a network structure is not . . . necessarily a sign that a movement or organization is at the cutting edge in the art of conflict. It may, rather, be a sign of distress.”¹⁵² The advantages of networks are that they permit autonomous action, but these usually come at the cost of control and coordination that characterizes hierarchies. This could lead in some circumstances to individual units engaging in “ill-judged action [that] undermine[s] the entire network.”¹⁵³

It is also not clear whether the networks that characterize the new terrorist groups are true networks or merely cells arranged in a pseudo-hierarchy. If the latter is the case, then some units are likely to be more important than others, thus opening the door to strategies of selective interdiction or even “decapitation,” with deleterious consequences for the rest of the

¹⁴⁸ Martha Crenshaw, “Terrorism and International Security,” prepared for The United Nations and Global Security Initiative and available at <www.un-globalsecurity.org/pdf/Crenshaw_paper_terrorism.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ Henner Hess, “Like Zealots and Romans: Terrorism and Empire in the 21st Century,” *Crime, Law & Social Change*, vol. 39 (2003), p. 351.

¹⁵⁰ David Tucker, “What is New about the New Terrorism and How Dangerous is It?” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 1–14.

¹⁵¹ Beam, “Leaderless Resistance.”

¹⁵² Tucker, “What is New about the New Terrorism and How Dangerous is It?” p. 10.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

network. In any event, the evidence of combating terrorism in the Middle East, Japan, and Europe suggests that the modern state—especially when acting multinationally—is capable of defeating even networked terrorism, both by replicating networks within its own counterterrorism apparatus and by creating networks of international cooperation.¹⁵⁴ The Bush administration understood this early on and, accordingly, embarked on a range of cooperative multilateral initiatives in a variety of areas ranging from reconciling legal frameworks to interdicting terrorist financing.¹⁵⁵ Finally, the claim of increased amateur involvement in the new terrorism is also suspect. As Tucker concludes trenchantly, “all terrorists are amateurs when they begin. If their mistakes are not fatal, they may learn to survive long enough to become professionals.”¹⁵⁶

The claim that the new terrorism represents fourth generation war may not be controversial as far as terrorism itself is concerned. However, it is more problematic as a standard claim about the future of warfare or as an evaluation of the viability of the state as an effective wielder of force. It is safe to say that fourth generation warfare will likely be the preferred instrument of resistance when used by weaker state or non-state entities in their struggle against a superpower. As such, it may be distinctive to the “inter-war” era. But there is no evidence yet that it has replaced, or will replace, conventional warfare.¹⁵⁷ As a result, the United States as a hegemonic power has to prepare for fourth generation challenges *and* more conventional threats simultaneously. Dealing with the former does not obviate the tests posed by the latter. The Bush administration has recognized this fact and its defense transformation initiative, which will take many years to complete, is self-consciously intended to address the war on terrorism; complete long-delayed investments in procurement, people, and modernization; and prepare for a variety of conventional and unconventional wars in the future.¹⁵⁸

Obviously much more remains to be done in this regard. And some of what is already under way probably can be done better. But the simple fact that fourth generation warfare bestows asymmetrical advantages on sub-statal entities in their struggles against states cannot

¹⁵⁴ Audrey Kurth Cronin, *The Diplomacy of Counterterrorism: Lessons Learned, Ignored, Disputed*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2002; Martha Crenshaw, *Terrorism and International Cooperation*, New York: Institute for East-West Security Studies, 1989; Neil C. Livingstone and Terrell E. Arnold, eds., *Fighting Back: Winning the War against Terrorism*, Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1986.

¹⁵⁵ The Bush administration’s early initiatives are detailed in The White House, *The Global War on Terrorism: The First 100 Days*, December 2001.

¹⁵⁶ Tucker, “What is New about the New Terrorism and How Dangerous is It?” p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ See the most insightful comments on this issue in Colin S. Gray, “How Has War Changed Since the End of the Cold War?” paper prepared for the U.S. National Intelligence Council Conference on the “Changing Nature of Warfare,” May 25, 2004, available at <www.cia.gov/nic/NIC_2020_2004_05_25_intro.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military Transformation: A Strategic Approach*.

be used to derive the proposition that the latter will ultimately be defeated because the cost-exchange ratios associated with such forms of war-fighting always disadvantage them. To make this proposition stick, the costs imposed by terrorism-as-fourth-generation-warfare must be compared to the value of the interests preserved by the state. On this score, terrorism has thus far failed to undermine state viability partly because, as Pape explains in the context of his discussion of suicide terrorism, “modern nation states are often willing to countenance high costs for high interests, and partly because modern nation states are often able to mitigate civilian costs by making economic and other adjustments.”¹⁵⁹ The cost-effectiveness of terrorism-as-fourth-generation-warfare may “make target nations somewhat more likely to surrender modest goals, but it is unlikely to compel states to abandon important interests related to the physical security or national wealth of the state.”¹⁶⁰ When the latter objectives are at stake, the state is more likely to unleash aggressive counter-responses that, despite all risks to proportionality and discrimination, would rather countenance a Hobbesian “war of all against all” than surrender to factional usurpers of doubtful legitimacy.

Further, there is also no reason yet to conclude that the modern state will be unable to counter, or master, the operational threats posed by fourth-generation warfare. The state has survived as a central entity in international politics for many centuries precisely because of its great adaptability. The evidence of the recent campaign in Afghanistan in fact demonstrates that even a conventional military force can rapidly adjust to conduct unorthodox operations for which it was not initially prepared. The key here appears to be skill, training, motivation, and organizational and doctrinal flexibility.¹⁶¹ What seems to matter is the artful combination of information, fire, and maneuver, whether used stealthily or in open warfare.¹⁶² If the battles at Tora Bora are in fact any indication, the U.S. military failed to apprehend Osama bin Laden and his cohort more because it did not “commit properly trained and motivated ground troops to traditional close combat”¹⁶³ than because of any inadequacies in its ability to master fourth-generation warfare. This is not to say that dealing with an elusive enemy will be easy or that fourth generation warfare can be countered effortlessly with conventional military forces. Recognizing exactly this fact, the Bush administration has placed enormous emphasis on rebuilding

¹⁵⁹ Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” p. 344.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Stephen Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002.

¹⁶² Steven Metz, *Armed Conflict in the 21st Century: The Information Revolution and Post-Modern Warfare*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000; Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Future Warfare: Anthology*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1999.

¹⁶³ Biddle, *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy*, p. viii.

U.S. Special Forces with the intent of developing the capabilities to prosecute fourth generation warfare,¹⁶⁴ and these forces are already playing a pivotal role in the current confrontation with terrorism.¹⁶⁵ All of this suggests that the adaptability of the modern state to counter fourth generation threats ought not to be underestimated. The epitaph for the state and its effectiveness in the war against terrorism cannot be written just yet.

Is the Global War on Terrorism Truly a War?

The third and perhaps most interesting debate in the current literature is whether the Bush administration's "global war on terrorism" is truly a "war" in the conventional understanding of that term. The debate understandably has both intellectual and partisan dimensions: the former, which aims for strategic clarity about the notions of war, victory, and trade-offs in the struggle against terror, will be the focus here, whereas the latter, which involves various critiques of the administration's policies, particularly over Iraq, are best ignored except insofar as they illuminate issues related to terrorism itself.

The administration's depiction of the confrontation with terrorism as a war per se has left many of even its supporters queasy simply on intellectual grounds. As Sir Michael Howard argued:

To declare war on terrorists or, even more illiterately, on terrorism is at once to accord terrorists a status and dignity that they seek and that they do not deserve. It confers on them a kind of legitimacy . . .

But to use, or rather to misuse, the term "war" is not simply a matter of legality or pedantic semantics. It has deeper and more dangerous consequences. To declare that one is at war is immediately to create a war psychosis that may be totally counterproductive for the objective being sought. It arouses an immediate expectation, and demand, for spectacular military action against some easily identifiable adversary, preferably a hostile state—action leading to decisive results.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Jennifer D. Kibbe, "The Rise of the Shadow Warriors," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 2 (March/April 2004), pp. 102–115.

¹⁶⁵ For a useful overview, see National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 63, *The Hunt for Bin Laden: Background on the Role of Special Forces in U.S. Military Strategy*, available at <www.gwu.edu/%7Eensarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB63/>; see also Anna Simons and David Tucker, "United States Special Operations Forces and the War on Terrorism," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2003), pp. 77–91.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Howard, "What's In A Name? How to Fight Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, no. 1 (January/February 2002), pp. 8–13.

The notion of “action leading to decisive results” has always been integral to the concept of war. As Jeffery Record argues, war “has involved military operations between states or between a state and an insurgent enemy for ultimate control of that state. In both cases the primary medium for war has been combat between fielded military forces, be they regular (state) or irregular (non-state) forces. Yet terrorist organizations do not field military forces as such and, in the case of Al Qaeda and its associated partners, are trans-state organizations that are pursuing non-territorial ends. As such, and given their secretive, cellular, dispersed, and decentralized ‘order of battle,’ they are not subject to conventional military destruction.”¹⁶⁷ Further, Record notes, unlike traditional war, the campaign against terrorism does not have “clear beginnings and endings,” will not produce “conclusive military victories against irregular enemies who refuse to quit precisely because they cannot be decisively defeated,” and cannot yield “clear standards of measuring success in the form of territory gained and enemy forces destroyed or otherwise removed from combat.”¹⁶⁸ If this is true, as some though not all of it obviously is, then the confrontation against terrorism, as Paul Pillar concluded, “is a war that cannot be won . . . Terrorism cannot be defeated—only reduced, attenuated, and to some degree controlled.”¹⁶⁹

Despite such criticisms, President Bush has remained steadfastly wedded to the notion of a global “war on terrorism,” insisting that this locution “is not a figure of speech” but rather the “inescapable calling of our generation.”¹⁷⁰ This imagery of hostilities, however, has been utilized primarily as a device of political mobilization, both domestically and internationally, with Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, for example, insisting that this would be “a new kind of war, one that has a new kind of enemy, new methods, new soldiers.”¹⁷¹ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld amplified this theme further by stating that:

This will be a war like none other our nation has faced . . . This war will not be waged by a grand alliance united for the single purpose of defeating an axis of hostile powers. Instead, it will involve floating coalitions of countries, which may change and evolve . . . This war will not necessarily be one in which we pore over military targets

¹⁶⁷ Jeffery Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003, pp. 2–3.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁶⁹ Paul Pillar, *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2001, pp. 217–218.

¹⁷⁰ The White House, “Remarks by the President on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom,” March 19, 2004.

¹⁷¹ Jim Garamone, “Senate Panel Approves Ridge as Homeland Security Secretary,” *Armed Forces Information Service*, January 17, 2003.

and mass forces to seize those targets. Instead, military force will likely be one of many tools we use to stop individuals, groups and countries that engage in terrorism ...¹⁷²

In employing practical rather than theoretical reason to define the struggle against terrorism in this way, the Bush administration sought to affirm three specific principles.

The first principle was that terrorism is a global threat, not a problem affecting only the United States. This notion served to emphasize that the confrontation under way did not involve merely a single and “distinct terrorist organization” but rather a “global insurgency”¹⁷³ intent on attacking many, but especially liberal democratic, states. The freedoms enjoyed by these states made them particularly vulnerable to terrorist attacks that were intended to punish them through both mass casualty violence from without and the imposition of painful constraints on their ways of life from within. By conceptualizing a “global war against terrorism,” the administration sought to emphasize both the empirical and the ideological dimensions of this new “inter-war” disorder, which had to be tackled on a global basis, with no geographical or ideational sanctuary offered to terrorists. Accordingly, the president challenged all states to “eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own,” adding for good measure that “if they do not act, America will.” He dismissed the distinction between “terrorism” and “freedom fighters” as unjustifiable, and condemned political bargaining conducted through the targeting of innocents as an unacceptable form of international politics.¹⁷⁴ Given this vision, the “global war on terrorism” would require a coalitional response with multiple strategies designed for different targets, which would include both terrorist organizations and their state sponsors. The latter were judged to be as important as the former for understandable reasons. The war on terrorism would involve a mix of military and diplomatic instruments. Above all, it would be a war of attrition, not a blitzkrieg—or a war of attrition that might involve multiple blitzkriegs.¹⁷⁵

The freedoms enjoyed by [liberal] states made them particularly vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

¹⁷² Donald H. Rumsfeld, “A New Kind of War,” *The New York Times*, September 27, 2001.

¹⁷³ Daniel Byman, “Scoring the War on Terrorism,” *The National Interest*, vol. 72 (Summer 2003), pp. 79–80.

¹⁷⁴ See, by way of example, George W. Bush, *The State of the Union Address*, January 29, 2002; George W. Bush, Remarks by the President to Military Personnel, Macdill Air Force Base, June 16, 2004; George W. Bush, President’s Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, September 20, 2001.

¹⁷⁵ For a thoughtful statement on what this would involve, see Andrew P. N. Erdmann, “Future Challenges in the War on Terrorism,” Remarks to the Gaudino Forum, Williams College, Williamstown, Mass., November 18, 2002, available at <<http://state.gov/s/p/rem/15554.htm>>.

The second principle was that terrorism married to WMD represented the most lethal threat to the international order imaginable. This concern was highlighted most acutely in the president's 2002 State of the Union Address when, using the controversial phrase "axis of evil," he emphasized the administration's intention "to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction."¹⁷⁶ This focus was reasonable given that WMD can kill large numbers of people in highly compressed time frames. Defenses against them are difficult and burdensome, even when available. Further, the technologies they embody are increasingly available to individuals and subnational groups either from poorly protected WMD facilities in various countries or through the emerging international black market; perfect weaponization of WMD is unnecessary for the success of lethal attacks, and improvised solutions concocted by non-state entities could suffice for the purpose of inflicting mass terror or mass casualties. Finally, the use restraint generally associated with state possessors of WMD may not reliably obtain when individuals and subnational groups are concerned because of the lack of a stable territorial footprint that would make them containable through deterrence. For all these reasons, the war on terrorism from the very beginning involved defeating the spread of WMD. In time, it would become the mainstay of U.S. justifications for the invasion of Iraq, a conflict that, in the absence of strong evidence linking Saddam Hussein with Al Qaeda, relied for its legitimacy on the fear that some states could "provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred." Should such an eventuality occur, obviously, "the price of indifference would be catastrophic."¹⁷⁷

Flowing from these concerns, the third principle averred that combating terrorism required active defenses and not just deterrence. Even before the September 11 attacks, political opinion in the United States was already moving toward the conclusion that the "deterrence by punishment only" model prominent during the Cold War was likely to be insufficient

¹⁷⁶ George W. Bush, *The State of the Union Address*, January 29, 2002. This issue has become a source of consternation for many administration critics who have argued with some justification that states possessing WMD, especially nuclear weaponry, are unlikely to part with these "crown jewels" for all the principal-agent problems known to afflict relations between state sponsors of terrorism and their clients. See Joseph Cirincione, Jessica T. Mathews, George Perkovich, with Alexis Orton, *WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004, pp. 48–49. Other critics, noting that insecure nuclear material repositories worldwide constitute a greater danger from the perspective of terrorism, have also chastised the administration for slackening in its efforts to protect such materials, with one authoritative report noting that the amount of potential nuclear weapons material secured in the two years immediately following September 11, 2001, was *less* than the amount secured in the two years immediately prior to the attacks. See Matthew Bunn and Anthony Wier, *Securing the Bomb: An Agenda for Action*, Washington, D.C.: Nuclear Threat Initiative, and the Project on Managing the Atom, Harvard University, 2004.

¹⁷⁷ Bush, *The State of the Union Address*, January 29, 2002.

when dealing with non-state actors and possibly rogue states. Successful deterrence, it was generally agreed, required holding at risk something individuals or regimes deeply valued: usually life in the case of the former, and resources and power in the case of the latter. If the entities concerned were willing to risk “all”—in effect, commit personal or national suicide—then deterrence by punishment alone would not suffice as a strategy for providing security. In such circumstances, deterrence would need to be supplemented by additional solutions, and active defenses, in varying forms, were seen as necessary to restore the eroding offense-defense equilibrium essential to security. Parenthetically, it may be noted that missile defenses, which represented the first application of the new post-Cold War emphasis on transitioning from deterrence by punishment to deterrence by denial and which were emphasized in the early days of the Bush administration as necessary to checkmating rogue missile threats to the United States, were seen as growing in importance in the post-September 11 environment, since “hostile states, including those that sponsor terrorism, are investing large resources to develop and acquire ballistic missiles of increasing range and sophistication that could be used against the United States and our friends and allies.”¹⁷⁸ After the Al Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington, the principle of active defense was expanded and incorporated into the end-to-end management of “strategic terrorism,” an approach that now included prevention, deterrence and/or interdiction, defenses, and mitigation. The fear of WMD terrorism, in fact, elevated the salience of preemptive interdiction beyond that normally implicit in the national right of self-defense. Drawing from the president’s own determination “not [to] stand by, as peril draws closer and closer,”¹⁷⁹ the administration unveiled a national security strategy that succinctly stated:

The United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today’s threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries’ choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first . . . The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, *National Policy on Ballistic Missile Defense*, Fact Sheet, May 20, 2003.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 15.

The administration's conceptualization of the "war on terrorism" as war thus had multiple objectives, sought to confront multiple threats, and involved multiple instruments. Any approach dealing with all these elements simultaneously runs the risk of losing focus, overextension, and eventual failure. Three challenges are particularly vexing in this regard. The first is simply the structural problem of coping with "a multiplicity of enemies, including rogue states; weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferators; terrorist organizations of global, regional, and national scope; and terrorism itself."¹⁸¹ As Record has charged, the administration "seems to have conflated them into a monolithic threat, and in so doing has subordinated strategic clarity to the moral clarity it strives for in foreign policy and may have set the United States on a course of open-ended and gratuitous conflict with states and non-state entities that pose no serious threat to the United States."¹⁸²

The second challenge relates to the unintended consequences of the campaign against terrorism around the world. This includes the willingness of some authoritarian regimes nominally allied with the United States in the war on terrorism "to employ the rhetoric of terrorism for their own political ends,"¹⁸³ namely, to confront and destroy domestic challenges to their

In the Muslim world in particular, the war on terrorism risks becoming a "clash of civilizations."

power through the use of force. It also involves the larger problem that instruments of violence used to defeat terrorism may in many instances "contribute to the increasing spiral of hatred and atrocity" and thus "increase the likelihood of further terrorist actions by discrediting the targeted group and cutting

off rational inquiry into the causes of their grievances and behavior."¹⁸⁴ In the Muslim world in particular, the war on terrorism risks becoming a "clash of civilizations," where the effort to interdict particular terrorist groups has strengthened the perception of a deliberate Western assault on Islam. When and how the use of force becomes escalatory and counter-productive in the struggle against terrorism remains an issue that is as clouded as it is controversial.

Finally, the third question that surrounds the campaign against terrorism is whether the United States will be able to win this war while remaining true to its founding vision of constitutional order. The current war on terrorism, like every war before it, has already led to the further growth of government with all its accompanying threats to individual rights, civil

¹⁸¹ Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*, p. v.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Tomis Kapitan and Erich Schulte, "The Rhetoric on "Terrorism" and its Consequences," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, vol. 30, no. 1 (Summer 2002), pp. 172–198.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

liberties, fiscal balances, and the institutions of limited rule.¹⁸⁵ Equally important is the issue of how the war against terrorism might affect the capacity of the United States to compete in the international economy and preserve its dominance in the international political system. There is already concern, for example, that constrictive visa issuance policies, although intended to prevent the entry of terrorists into the country, inadvertently end up choking the flow of scientific skills into the United States and, by implication, undermining its ability to preserve its technological supremacy in the international system.¹⁸⁶ The concerns arising from frayed trans-Atlantic relations, diminishing respect for the United States internationally, and the global uncertainty about how American power might be exercised in the future all bear in different ways on the question of how the war on terrorism could affect U.S. capabilities and standing over the long term.

When all these dimensions are considered, whether the global war on terrorism is truly a war is difficult to answer. On balance, the answer is affirmative. At the most abstract level, it is best understood as a politico-moral campaign against the abhorrent practice of targeting innocents for certain strategic ends. In this sense, the fight against terrorism is a war akin to the great campaigns against piracy and slavery earlier. All these struggles were first and foremost moral crusades against certain obnoxious human practices, but they also involved military, diplomatic, economic, and ideological instruments of warfare. The current battle against terrorism, therefore, has a long and distinguished lineage. Viewed in this perspective, it is indeed appropriate, Michael Howard's admonitions notwithstanding, to conceive of the current struggle as a war against terrorism itself—terrorism now understood not as some abstract Platonic form that cannot be defeated at a world-historical level, but as an inhumane political practice that can be targeted and, more importantly, delegitimized, even if it cannot be totally eradicated. Given this objective, President Bush has been right all along: terrorism is, and ought to be, an unacceptable instrumentality because it sacrifices innocent life in the service of some political vision that, no matter how attractive or justifiable, subordinates means to ends and,

¹⁸⁵ Ted Galen Carpenter, *Peace and Freedom: Foreign Policy for a Constitutional Republic*, Washington, D.C.: CATO Institute, 2004; "Big Government is Back," *The Economist*, September 27, 2001; Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *A Year of Loss: Reexamining Civil Liberties since September 11*, New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 2002.

¹⁸⁶ For more on this issue, see Paarlberg, "Knowledge as Power: Science, Military Dominance, and U.S. Security," pp. 146–150, and "Current Visa Restrictions Interfere with U.S. Science and Engineering Contributions to Important National Needs," Statement from Bruce Alberts, President, National Academy of Sciences, Wm. A. Wulf, President, National Academy of Engineering, and Harvey Fineberg, President, Institute of Medicine, revised June 13, 2003, available at <www4.nationalacademies.org/news.nsf/isbn/s12132002?OpenDocument>.

accordingly, paves the way for a tyranny that obliterates the respect for persons that lies at the center of every good political order.¹⁸⁷

Beyond the larger moral dimensions that make the struggle against terrorism a true conflict with evil, there are clearly some components of the present campaign that are, properly speaking, war. These include, at the very least, those aspects pertaining to the direct use of military instruments against terrorist non-state adversaries and, where relevant, their state supporters. This element also implicates those dimensions pertaining to the mobilization of intelligence resources, economic instruments, and political-diplomatic tools used in support of the relevant interdiction operations. Although progress against terrorism can be difficult to measure, those aspects of the present struggle that involve using military instruments against terrorist groups directly do yield indices of success or failure: the survival or demise of specific terrorist cells; the continuing freedom terrorists have to operate; the levels of domestic support for tactical counterterrorism; the status of the terrorist group's leadership and command structure; the extent to which recruitment has been disrupted; and, finally, whether the terrorist adversary is in fact continuing to commit attacks, with what frequency, and at what levels of damage.¹⁸⁸

These yardsticks actually undermine some of the propositions that Jeffery Record has advanced in his critique of the administration's claims to be involved in a *war* on terrorism. For example, while a campaign against terrorism may not have a clear beginning and ending, the same would be true of many interstate wars as well. The historical record suggests that the origins and dénouement of many international conflicts are often best understood only in retrospect, even though it may be easier to date the start and finish of some specific military engagement.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, even if it is true that the war against terrorism lacks a clear commencement and finale, the same does not always hold automatically for wars against specific terrorist groups. When these groups are made the unit of analysis, it is possible to discern—again most confidently in retrospect—both when their operations began and when they might have been put out of business; whether or not they have been defeated, and how conclusively; and, what needs to be done both operationally and ideologically to eliminate them as a continuing threat. Historically various terrorist groups have indeed been defeated by a combination of different state actions, and although there are obvious differences in how wars between

¹⁸⁷ George W. Bush, *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*, September 20, 2001.

¹⁸⁸ Byman, "Scoring the War on Terrorism," pp. 75–84.

¹⁸⁹ For a discussion of this issue centered on the Peloponnesian War, see Ashley J. Tellis, "Reconstructing Political Realism: The Long March to Scientific Theory," *Security Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 1995), pp. 12–18.

states and wars against insurgents are conducted, there is no intrinsic reason why campaigns against the latter should be denied the status of war whenever that is in fact relevant, or why a larger war against terrorism cannot be coherently conducted alongside a smaller war against specific terrorist groups. Eliot Cohen spoke to this issue cogently when he wrote:

Political people often dislike calling things by their names. Truth, particularly in war-time, is so unpleasant that we drape it in a veil of evasions, and the right naming of things is far from a simple task. Take the matter of this war. It is most assuredly something other than the “Afghan War,” as the press sometimes calls it. After all, the biggest engagement took place on American soil, and the administration promises to wage the conflict globally, and not, primarily, against Afghans.

The “9/11 War,” perhaps? But the war began well before Sept. 11, and its casualties include, at the very least, the dead and wounded in our embassies in Africa, on the USS Cole and, possibly, in Somalia and the Khobar Towers. “Osama bin Laden’s War”? There are precedents for this in history (King Philip’s War, Pontiac’s War, or even The War of Jenkins’ Ear), but the war did not begin with bin Laden and will not end with his death.

A less palatable but more accurate name is World War IV. The Cold War was World War III, which reminds us that not all global conflicts entail the movement of multimillion-man armies, or conventional front lines on a map. The analogy with the Cold War does, however, suggest some key features of that conflict: that it is, in fact, global; that it will involve a mixture of violent and nonviolent efforts; that it will require mobilization of skill, expertise and resources, if not of vast numbers of soldiers; that it may go on for a long time; and that it has ideological roots.¹⁹⁰

While tactical antiterrorism operations against specific terrorist groups confirm some elements of the current campaign to be, in fact, warlike, there is admittedly much else that sits uncomfortably with the notion of “war” and arguably some that is counter-productive to the achievement of victory. The numerous policy statements appearing in the form of presidential speeches, official interviews, newspaper articles by senior government figures, and especially the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, all suggest that the Bush administration has been conscious that the “war” against terrorism is a complex and loaded metaphor and, hence, ought to be used carefully and with discrimination. As far as articulated positions go, the administration has been extremely careful to avoid painting the current antiterror campaign as one that is directed against a religion, a people, or a country.

If this objective risks being undermined it is not because of any administration rhetoric but because the effort to destroy certain terrorist groups, while simultaneously delegitimizing

¹⁹⁰ Eliot A. Cohen, “World War IV: Let’s Call This Conflict What It Is,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 20, 2001.

terrorism as an instrumentality, contains within itself a set of inescapable tensions that are often exacerbated by the pursuit of specific U.S. interests. These interests, which transcend any particular administration and are related to the larger effort at protecting U.S. equities abroad, often drive policies that inexorably create local winners and losers in different parts of the world. Faced with the magnitude of American power, and sometimes the strength of local regimes supported by that power, it is not surprising that some losers would choose to overcome their losses by armed confrontation—which, in turn, ends up re-legitimizing terrorism as a form of resistance to American power.

The problem of terrorism as resistance, therefore, is not produced by Bush administration policy—although specific policies can indeed exacerbate or mitigate this defiance—but rather derives from structural antagonisms relating to differences in power amidst ongoing interstate and intrastate competition. Accordingly, terrorism as war against a superior power, and the war on terrorism as the countervailing effort to extinguish political resistance, will continue long after the Bush administration has ceased to hold office. One U.S. military officer, reflecting on the growth of insurgents worldwide in the context of this predicament, noted that the policy question in a very practical sense boils down to this: “Are we making them faster than we are killing them?” Answering this query is not easy. But, if it is to be engaged, the analytic challenge will be to unpack the war against terrorism into its constituent elements, and examine how the United States might be doing in regard to each aspect separately. The next section briefly attempts such a survey in the Asian context.

How Is the United States Doing in the War on Terrorism in Asia?

Evaluating U.S. achievements and failures in the war on terrorism requires attention to different aspects of the current campaign. Three dimensions of American performance in particular are significant: identifying the nature of the terrorist threat and the best means to defeat it; mounting effective direct operations to defeat terrorism and deny it resources; and developing a grand strategy to defeat terrorism.

Identifying the Nature of the Terrorist Threat and the Best Means to Defeat It

Correctly identifying the nature of the terrorist threat and the appropriate means to defeat it is the first and most important ingredient for success in the war against terrorism. As Carl von Clausewitz noted in his classic study *On War*: “First, the supreme, most far-reaching act

of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it for, not trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its true nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.”¹⁹¹ The appropriate nature of the war, however, cannot be discerned without some understanding of the character of the enemy. The 9/11 Commission, in its monumental assessment of the Al Qaeda attacks, took a stab at this question and in a direct criticism of the Bush administration’s approach to the issue plaintively declared that:

9/11 has taught us that terrorism against American interests “over there” should be regarded just as we regard terrorism against America “over here.” In this same sense, the American homeland is the planet. But the enemy is not just “terrorism,” some generic evil. This vagueness blurs the strategy. The catastrophic threat at this moment in history is more specific. It is the threat posed by *Islamist* terrorism—especially the Al Qaeda network, its affiliates, and its ideology.¹⁹²

This view, that the adversary today is not terrorism, but Islamist terrorism, has many advocates in the United States. Eliot Cohen, for example, stated succinctly, “The enemy in this war is not ‘terrorism’—a distilled essence of evil, conducted by the real-world equivalents of J. K. Rowling’s Lord Voldemort, Tolkien’s Sauron or C. S. Lewis’s White Witch—but militant Islam.”¹⁹³ Similarly, James Kurth has argued that “the war [on terrorism] is indeed a war against terrorists and the states that harbor them as Bush stated, but all of these terrorists and states are Islamic. The war is also a war between the West and Islam as bin Laden stated, but the Western peoples and their governments do not habitually use the term ‘Western’ to identify themselves, nor do the Islamic peoples and their governments routinely engage in terrorism. The war is actually one between Western nations and Islamic terrorists.”¹⁹⁴

Even though it understands that the terrorist threat to the United States today—at an empirical level—is posed predominantly by Islamist terrorism, the Bush administration has steadfastly resisted declaring—at the level of principle—that the war on terrorism is a campaign against radicalized, militant Islam.¹⁹⁵ Instead, the president has consistently defined the

¹⁹¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 88.

¹⁹² *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Washington, D.C.: The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004, p. 362.

¹⁹³ Cohen, “World War IV: Let’s Call This Conflict What It Is.”

¹⁹⁴ James Kurth, “The War and the West,” *Watch on the West*, vol. 3, no. 2 (February 2002), A Newsletter of FPRI’s Center for the Study of America and the West, available at <www.fpri.org/ww/0302.200202.kurth.warandthewest.html>. For a lengthier evaluation, see James Kurth, “The War and the West,” *Orbis*, vol. 46, no. 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 321–332.

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, pp. 5–10.

struggle to be one against “terrorists of global reach”¹⁹⁶ and “nations that are compromised by terror, including those who harbor terrorists.”¹⁹⁷ In fact, in direct contrast to the later claims of the 9/11 Commission cited above, President Bush has consistently declared that “the enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.”¹⁹⁸

In this debate, the president is entirely right. Quite apart from the larger question of why the war against terrorism ought to focus on terrorism in itself as a moral issue, there are at least three reasons for refusing to focus the conflict on Islamist terrorism, even if it is empirically the most important challenge today.

First, an emphasis on defeating Islamist resistance at the level of principle will be easily confused with a war against Islam at the practical level of politics and public diplomacy. At a time when the pursuit of U.S. interests in the Middle East has already caused a great deal of

A global campaign focused on Islamist terrorism would only strengthen the perception of millions of Muslims worldwide that the United States has indeed embarked on a new crusade against their faith.

angst in the region (even apart from the war on terrorism), a global campaign focused on Islamist terrorism would only strengthen the perception of millions of Muslims worldwide that the United States has indeed embarked on a new crusade against their faith. The recondite nature of the term “Islamist” also does not help in this instance: although it refers to an “anti-democratic movement, bearing a holistic vision of Islam whose final aim is

the restoration of the caliphate”¹⁹⁹ through revolutionary violence if necessary, the nuances that capture this specific meaning, as opposed to the generalized adjective “Islamic,” are better appreciated by scholars than by the Muslim “street.”²⁰⁰ Consequently, there are good prudential reasons to avoid asserting that the war against terrorism is a war against Islamist terrorism.

Second, the processes of globalization that assist modern terrorism conspire to make an overbearing focus on Islamist terrorism unhelpful. Given the increasingly globalized world system that terrorist groups today exploit, there are complex networks of non-Islamic assets and

¹⁹⁶ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Letter of Introduction.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁹ Mehdi Mozaffari, “Bin Laden and Islamist Terrorism,” *Militaert Tidsskrift*, vol. 131 (March 2002), available at <www.mirkflem.pup.blueyonder.co.uk/pdf/islamistterrorism.pdf>.

²⁰⁰ For more on the distinction between Islamist movements and Islamic movements, see Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, and Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, trans. Anthony F. Roberts, London: I.B. Tauris, 2003.

resources that inevitably become relevant to the fight against terrorism. A concentrated focus on the Islamist dimension of the current insurgency runs the risk of missing these elements. Further, if U.S. counterterrorism efforts become more and more successful over time, the prospect of cooperation between Islamist groups and other non-Islamic centers of resistance, either national or transnational, state or non-state, will increase. The possibility of such coalitions, forged under pressures of necessity, already appear translucently today. An emphasis, at the level of public policy, on exclusively confronting Islamist terrorism may therefore fail to appreciate the rising complexity of the emerging anti-American insurgency that Washington will have to confront for a long time to come. As Michael Radu pointedly concluded, “Indeed, with all the talk about the war on terrorism, magnified by the presidential campaign, it appears that most Americans, including politicians and the media, forget that terrorism is not limited to Islamists but include other, sometimes older groups, whose capabilities could help the likes of the Al Qaeda nebula.”²⁰¹

Third, the war against terrorism cannot be won except through an international coalition of states who band together to defeat this threat. Creating such a coalition will require countries that are threatened by different kinds of terrorism to share information, pool resources, and engage in various kinds of cooperative activities precisely because they are a threatened set of actors who are likely to cooperate among themselves given their general antagonism towards state power and because the sinews of globalization, from which terrorists groups today draw resources, pass through a variety of countries that may or many not be threatened by Islamist terrorism specifically. A deliberate American emphasis on Islamist terrorism as the adversary, in contrast to terrorism writ large, then runs the risk of alienating those states that might not be threatened by Islamist but by other forms of terrorism—states that might be useful coalition partners nonetheless and whose resources may be necessary for defeating even the threat of Islamist terrorism itself. The necessity of building the largest possible multinational coalition against terrorism, therefore, demands that U.S. antiterrorism strategy—at the highest conceptual level—focus on the widest common threat rather than on any specific subset of current importance to Washington.

For all these reasons, the Bush administration’s principled refusal to convert the war on terrorism into an anti-Islamist campaign is eminently sensible. Eliminating the Islamist element from the center of public, although not necessarily empirical, focus goes some distance in clarifying the nature of the terrorist threat, but it does not resolve the issue entirely. Even a cursory glance at the State Department’s annual report, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*,

²⁰¹ Michael Radu, “The End of ETA?” Foreign Policy Research Institute, *E-Notes*, October 8, 2004.

makes clear that there are numerous, diverse terrorist groups and many different kinds of terrorisms. In this jungle of competing targets, the United States obviously cannot afford—despite the dominant rhetoric of the day—to dissipate its energies by countering all kinds of terrorism simultaneously. Consequently, as Jeffery Record correctly points out, a strategic approach that discriminates between problems and economizes on the use of national resources is needed.²⁰²

Given this requirement, the most important targets for immediate attention ought to be those capable of inflicting mass casualties, whether through conventional or unconventional means.²⁰³ Terrorist groups intent on inflicting lesser levels of injury are irksome and ought to be targeted whenever possible, but not at the cost of focused attention on limiting catastrophic harm. If this goal represents the first criterion for limiting U.S. attention in the war against terrorism, four categories of entities present themselves for attention: terrorist states; terrorist groups with transnational capability and interests; terrorist groups with national capability and concerns; and finally the amorphous mass of sympathizers supportive of, but not actively involved in, terrorist activity.

Whenever terrorist states capable of inflicting catastrophic harm exist, they should be the first targets of U.S. notice because states are formidable organized institutions that can inflict staggering levels of damage if they seek to exploit or support terrorism.²⁰⁴ Fortunately, and despite many challenges, this is also the easiest problem to deal with. Even terrorist states have a physical footprint, possess assets that can be held at risk, are governed by a regime structure that is identifiable, and are usually sensitive enough to the balance of power.²⁰⁵ Not surprisingly, all the seven states traditionally identified as engaged in terrorism—Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba, North Korea, and Sudan—have preferred to challenge the United States only surreptitiously and rarely through mass casualty attacks for obvious fear of massive U.S. retaliation.

Terrorist groups with transnational capabilities and interests, such as Al Qaeda, are in contrast the deadliest adversaries: they have no obvious territorial footprint, they garner

²⁰² Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*, pp. 1–6.

²⁰³ This argument goes beyond the thesis elucidated in Ashton B. Carter, John Deutch, and Philip Zelikow, “Catastrophic Terrorism: Tackling the New Danger,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 6 (November/December 1998), pp. 80–94.

²⁰⁴ See the discussion in Institute for National Strategic Studies, *Strategic Assessment 1999: Priorities for a Turbulent World*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1999, pp. 219–228.

²⁰⁵ Kori N. Schake and Justin P. Bernier, “Dealing with Rogue States,” in Richard L. Kugler and Ellen L. Frost, eds., *The Global Century: Globalization and National Security*, vol. 2, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001, pp. 283–297.

resources across national borders, are strategically (or ideologically) committed to inflicting high levels of harm on their adversaries, and are relatively more immune to retribution.²⁰⁶ They should remain the primary focus of U.S. strategic attention.

Terrorist groups limited to national objectives are a more difficult category to assess. Their limited interests ought to make them the primary responsibility of their own governments, rather than that of the United States, at least in the first instance. This is the preferred course of action advocated by many administration critics.²⁰⁷ Judging the significance of national terrorist groups, however, is often problematic because their import cannot be determined without corollary judgments about the nature of the regimes they oppose (which may sometimes be as odious as the terrorist groups themselves, or at least sufficiently problematic).

The United States should, therefore, focus on such terrorist groups mainly if they are wedded to a transnational ideology that is likely to target the United States, countries that are vital to U.S. national purposes rigorously evaluated, or important American interests at some future point in time, or if the groups are anticipated to grow in capacity such that they could mount significant extra-national challenges in the future. If the terrorist groups, however, are motivated primarily by local grievances and are likely to remain challenges mainly to their host countries, then the United States should unreservedly assist the threatened states if they are governed by unquestionably democratic regimes. These regimes ought to carry the primary responsibility for defeating local terrorist groups, but the importance of democracy for both geopolitical and ideological reasons to the United States ought to earn democratic states a high degree of American support even in what may be their own national wars against terrorism. Authoritarian regimes confronted by national terrorist groups ought to be treated more cautiously. These regimes should become recipients of U.S. assistance if they are important to key U.S. strategic interests; do not abet terrorist groups for their own purposes; and do not exploit the threat of terrorism to hold on to political power illegitimately. Even then, opportunities to defuse local terrorist movements through political means ought to be explored.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, pp. 5–10.

²⁰⁷ See, for example, Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*, 19ff.

²⁰⁸ By these criteria, there is a strong case for assisting Russia, for example, in its struggle against Chechen terrorism. Russia is important to U.S. interests; it is struggling to develop democratic institutions; it does not support any terrorist groups; and at least some of the Chechen terrorists that threaten Russia are capable of threatening, and arguably may have the intent to threaten, peace and stability beyond Russia itself. The Indian struggle against some of the terrorist groups operating in Kashmir similarly fit these criteria. In both cases, U.S. support does not imply giving these countries a blank check in their struggle against terrorism. Rather, criticism of Russian or Indian failures must occur within a larger context of support and, thus, offer incentives for their governments to pursue policies that meet certain standards of political propriety.

These criteria, obviously, cannot be mechanistically applied. In practice, political judgments will have to be made in regard to the specific course of action that the United States should follow in dealing with various species of terrorism. The rules of thumb are important nonetheless because they could help to prevent Washington from transforming a meaningful war against terrorism into a frustrating “war of all against all” where both political caution and moral prudence entirely disappear.

As important as identifying the threat is for success, developing the appropriate means to defeat it is just as critical. Terrorist states and terrorist groups of global reach have to be confronted by some combination of deterrence, containment, and direct application of military force when appropriate. These same instruments, coupled with political suasion, compromise, and conciliation, may be appropriate when dealing with national terrorism, depending on the motivation and grievances of the groups in question and the nature of the governing regime. As far as confronting these three categories of threat are concerned, the instruments of war can be appropriate and the struggle against terrorism may truly manifest itself as a “war” against terrorism. The real challenge, however, may lie in countering the fourth category of threat, the sympathizer, who not only cannot be managed through direct coercion, but who may actually move from passive sympathy to active resistance if confronted by inappropriate force. The metaphor of war may thus be singularly unsuitable for dealing with this category and could actually be counter-productive.

The record thus far in the war on terrorism suggests that the United States has not been unambiguously successful in identifying the nature of the terrorist threat in Asia and the best means to defeat it. Afghanistan, for example, was a terrorist state long before September 11, but the U.S. government, partly for technical reasons, never listed it as a state sponsor of terrorism. It did not evoke concerted U.S. counteraction, merely “smart sanctions,” before the devastating attacks mounted by Al Qaeda in New York and Washington. Iraq under Saddam Hussein had tenuous links with Al Qaeda, but in the run up to *Operation Iraqi Freedom* these connections, it is now widely acknowledged, were at the very least misperceived and possibly misrepresented.²⁰⁹ Of all the other identified state sponsors of terrorism in Asia, Iran and Syria have probably been the most deliberate and adventurous, with North Korea following in that

²⁰⁹ The Iraqi-Al Qaeda relationship has been helpfully summarized in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Washington, D.C.: The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004, p. 66 ff. As recently as October 4, 2004, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged that he knew of no “strong, hard evidence” linking Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and Al Qaeda, despite the extensive contacts that existed between the two before the Iraq invasion. See Will Dunham, “Rumsfeld: No ‘Hard Evidence’ of Iraq-Al Qaeda Link,” Reuters, October 4, 2004.

order.²¹⁰ All, however, have been careful to avoid directly challenging the United States. In none of these cases, save Afghanistan and Iraq, has the U.S. government sought to confront the problem of state terrorism through war. In the case of North Korea, the United States actually engaged in three rounds of terrorism talks that culminated in a joint statement in 2000, wherein the DPRK reiterated its opposition to terrorism and agreed to support international actions against such activity. In the case of Iran and Syria, Washington has settled for a policy of malign and benign neglect respectively—but without any obvious success in terminating these countries' support for terrorism.²¹¹

Perhaps the most surprising omission in respect to identifying terrorist states in Asia over the years has been Pakistan, which since at least 1989 has maintained a large national infrastructure oriented toward supporting the creation, subsidy, and operations of various Islamist terrorist groups warring against India and Afghanistan.²¹² Except for a brief moment in the early 1990s when the first Bush administration came close to formally designating Pakistan a terrorist state, Islamabad's complicity in international terrorism has largely escaped official U.S. censure, even though it has been the subject of much harsh reporting and analysis in the American and international media.²¹³ While Indian coercive diplomacy in 2001–02 brought Pakistani state-sponsored terrorism once again to international attention, even the post-September 11 U.S. assault on global terrorism appears to have been unable to completely wean Islamabad away from terrorism as an aspect of its national security strategy.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ The State Department's annual report, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, remains a good source of information on the activities of these three countries. See also Gary Sick, "Iran: Confronting Terrorism," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Autumn 2003), pp. 83–98; Richard H. Schultz, Jr., "Iranian Covert Aggression," *Terrorism and Violence*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1994), pp. 281–302; Daniel Pipes, "Why Assad's Terror Works and Qadhdhafi's Does Not," *Orbis*, vol. 33, no. 4 (Fall 1989), pp. 501–508; and Joseph S. Bermudez, Jr., *Terrorism, The North Korean Connection*, New York: Crane Russak, 1990.

²¹¹ The dilemmas facing the United States in dealing with terrorist states are analyzed in Meghan L. O'Sullivan, "The Dilemmas of U.S. Policy Toward 'Rogue' States," available at <www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/Views/Articles/Osullivan/2000springIFRI.htm>.

²¹² Olivier Roy, "Pakistan: Un Nouvel 'Etat-voyou?' [Pakistan: A new "rogue state?"]], *Politique Internationale*, vol. 86 (Hiver 1999–2000), pp. 383–399.

²¹³ See Jessica Stern, "Pakistan's Jihad Culture," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000), pp. 115–126. For excellent overviews of state-sponsored terrorism and Pakistan, see International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, ICG Asia Report No. 36, July 29, 2002; *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, ICG Asia Report No. 49, March 20, 2003.

²¹⁴ As recently as July 14, 2004, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage stated at a press conference in New Delhi, "Clearly, all the infrastructure [in Pakistan] that supports cross-border terrorism has not been dismantled. Some has been dismantled." See Tara Shankar Sahay, "Terror infrastructure still exists in Pak: Armitage," Rediff.com, July 14, 2004, available at <<http://in.rediff.com/cms/print.jsp?docpath=/news/2004/jul/14us.htm>>. On the logic of Pakistan's reliance on terrorism as part of its national security strategy, see Ashley J. Tellis, *Stability in South Asia*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1997, pp. 5–33.

Where terrorist groups of global reach (or transnational terrorist groups more generally) are concerned, the United States has done better in identifying the threat, but whether it has found the best means to defeat them is not yet clear. Using a combination of direct military action, law enforcement activities (including focused assistance to various national governments to improve legislation, regulation, and judicial action, and to create counterterrorism units, anti-money laundering teams, and counterterrorism centers) and direct financial support, both Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia have been resolutely attacked. These operations, however, are far from complete, and both groups, being hydra-headed, are likely to metastasize into more regionally or nationally based autonomous variants in the future.²¹⁵

In contrast to terrorist groups of global reach, the United States appears to have been less effective in understanding the challenges posed by national terrorist groups possessing the potential to operate beyond their original confines and developing instruments to defeat them.²¹⁶ It is increasingly obvious today that a variety of lesser-known regional or national terrorist outfits, such as Ansar al-Islam, the Zarqawi network, the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), Salafiya Jihadia, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), are now gravitating toward Al Qaeda operationally and seek to advance its objectives of worldwide terror.²¹⁷ In South Asia, for example, the United States failed to perceive early enough the threat posed by Taliban reconstitution in northwestern Pakistan and the efforts of the Pakistani security services to shield various Taliban clients from American scrutiny. Similarly, the threat posed by radical Islamist groups, like Jaish-e-Mohammad and Laskhar-e-Taiba, was underestimated: although these groups initially focused on Kashmir and still do, they nevertheless view India, Israel, and the United States as a single irredeemable continuum of evil.²¹⁸

The U.S. effort to cope with national terrorist entities is also handicapped by problems of a different sort. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, for example, Washington is often perceived

²¹⁵ Ambassador Cofer Black, "Al-Qaida: The Threat to the United States and Its Allies," Testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Washington, D.C., April 1, 2004, available at <www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2004/31018.htm>. See also Jonathan Schanzer, *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror*, Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004.

²¹⁶ See Matthew A. Levitt, "Untangling the Terror Web," Testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, October 22, 2003, available at <banking.senate.gov/_files/levitt.pdf>.

²¹⁷ Raymond Bonner and Don van Natta, Jr., "Regional Terrorist Groups Pose Growing Threat, Experts Warn," *The New York Times*, February 8, 2004.

²¹⁸ For a succinct discussion about terrorism in South Asia and the anti-Americanism of key extremist groups in Pakistan, see K. Alan Kronstadt, "Terrorism in South Asia," *CRS Report for Congress*, March 8, 2004.

as supporting corrupt, unrepresentative regimes. This is a particularly vexatious problem in the Middle East where U.S. counterterrorism efforts are stymied by deep popular resentment of U.S. support for corrupt and undemocratic regimes. In Russia, the threat posed by Chechen terrorists has provided President Putin with an opportunity to consolidate state power at the expense of regional governments, an already weak democratic experiment, and a fragile market economy. In the process, the liberal and constitutional impulses in Russia have been further constricted, putting the United States in the rather awkward position of having to watch Moscow—a staunch partner in the war on terrorism—slowly strangle political institutions and civil society in the name of assuring homeland security.²¹⁹ Finally, the war against national terrorist groups is compromised by the U.S. reliance on governments that themselves abet terrorism for strategic purposes. For example, Washington now finds itself deeply reliant on Pakistan's General Musharraf and the Saudi government for prosecuting a war against Al Qaeda at a time when both regimes remain in different ways a source of comfort, if not support, for terrorist activity in the region.

Despite numerous pledges by General Musharraf to permanently eschew terrorism as state policy, Islamabad continues to provide ongoing support for terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan and Kashmir; it maintains a large infrastructure of terrorism, including training camps, communication networks, and organized financing of extremist individuals and groups; it persists in shielding Taliban remnants along its northwestern frontier and elsewhere from U.S. interdiction; and it remains a conflicted partner in the U.S. war against Al Qaeda.²²⁰ Although Saudi Arabia has done much better than Pakistan as far as controlling activities that support terrorism are concerned, Riyadh still has a long way to go. A recent analysis of Saudi activities has concluded that the kingdom has not fully implemented its new laws and regulations, thus resulting in continued opportunities for the witting or unwitting financing of terrorism. While acting against many organized charities, Saudi Arabia has not yet taken public punitive

²¹⁹ For a discussion of Russian strategies towards domestic terrorism amidst the larger transformations in its society and in U.S.-Russian relations, see Hanson, "Russia: Evil Empire or Strategic Partner?" pp. 163–198.

²²⁰ A good overview of Pakistan's continued involvement in terrorism can be found in Walter Andersen, "South Asia: A Selective War on Terrorism?" in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, pp. 227–259; and Raj Chengappa, "General Mischief," *India Today*, September 13, 2004, pp. 39–44. With respect to operations against Al Qaeda particularly, Arnaud de Borchgrave has pointed out that although approximately 500 Al Qaeda personnel have been apprehended in Pakistan, almost all of these arrests took place only after U.S. intelligence developed the relevant information that compelled Islamabad's cooperation in making the seizures. Very rarely has intelligence about Al Qaeda operatives originated from Pakistani intelligence agencies, which have often sought actually to mislead their American interlocutors. See Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Real Terror Culprit," *The Washington Times*, August 2, 2004.

actions against individuals who finance terrorism, thus failing to impose personal accountability and, by implication, undermining the effort to delegitimize these activities. The Saudi state also continues to fund the global propagation of Wahabism, the narrow sectarian school of Sunni Islam that legitimizes the royal house of Saud and often supports radical Islamist groups abroad in its quest to restore doctrinal purity in the Muslim world.²²¹

Most problematically, however, the Bush administration has been least successful in regard to managing the last category of threat, the large population of Muslim sympathizers throughout the world. As one serving CIA officer points out in a searing anonymous indictment published recently, the conduct of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq itself has left both countries “seething with anti-U.S. sentiment, fertile grounds for the expansion of Al Qaeda and kindred groups.”²²² The failure of the United States here has been a problem of diagnosis in the first instance. When President Bush for instance asked, “why do they hate us?” he concluded that they—referring to the terrorists—hate the United States because “they hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”²²³ While this conclusion is arguably true insofar as it refers to the motivations of some terrorist groups per se, it is dangerous to conclude that this sentiment actually characterizes the mindset of their vast number of Muslim sympathizers. The evidence on this issue increasingly suggests that Muslim dislike of the West in general and of the United States in particular is less a matter of its institutions and more a consequence of its policies—however justifiable these may be from the viewpoint of American interests.²²⁴

While many aspects of modernity may offend conservative Muslims, no Islamist movement as yet has launched a jihad to destroy a genuinely democratic regime; in fact, one survey suggests that “many of the Muslim publics polled expressed a stronger desire for democratic

²²¹ See *Update on the Global Campaign Against Terrorist Financing*, Second Report of an Independent Task Force on Terrorist Financing sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, July 15, 2004; Susan Schmidt, “To Thwart Terrorism, Saudis Outline Controls on Charities,” *The Washington Post*, June 3, 2004; David B. Ottaway, “U.S. Eyes Money Trails of Saudi-Backed Charities,” *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2004; “Saudis in Terror’s Shadow,” *The New York Times*, June 28, 2004.

²²² Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*, Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2004.

²²³ George W. Bush, *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*, September 20, 2001.

²²⁴ Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*; Alfred B. Prados, “Middle East: Attitudes toward the United States,” *CRS Report for Congress*, December 31, 2001. Pew Global Attitudes Project, “A Year After Iraq War: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists,” March 16, 2004, available at <<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/206.pdf>>; Pew Global Attitudes Project, “Views of a Changing World 2003: War With Iraq Further Divides Global Publics,” June 3, 2003, available at <<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf>>.

freedoms than the publics in some nations of Eastern Europe, notably Russia and Bulgaria.”²²⁵ The same poll goes on to state that “despite soaring anti-Americanism and substantial support for Osama bin Laden, there is considerable appetite in the Muslim world for democratic freedoms. The broader, 44-nation survey shows that people in Muslim countries place a high value on freedom of expression, freedom of the press, multi-party systems and equal treatment under the law. This includes people living in kingdoms such as Jordan and Kuwait, as well as those in authoritarian states like Uzbekistan and Pakistan . . . The post-war update finds that in most Muslim populations, large majorities continue to believe that Western-style democracy can work in their countries.”²²⁶

In the face of such evidence, what Osama bin Laden appears to have done successfully is to make an appealing argument that Washington’s support of unjust, despotic, and corrupt Muslim states, its war against Muslim countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, and its favoritism toward Israel proves that the United States is at war with Islam itself and, consequently, leaves the weaker Muslims community with no alternative to armed resistance and jihad.²²⁷ As long as millions of Muslims believe this claim, many passive sympathizers will elect for active terrorism, and the war against terrorism will not be won.²²⁸ Thus far, the Bush administration unfortunately has little to show by way of success on this score. When all that the “Arab street” could do was mount a few, ultimately inconsequential, demonstrations of public anger, the American failure to soothe Muslim sentiments would have had no deleterious consequences. But when the street acquired the capacity—as it has today—to reach beyond expressions of anger directed at local regimes and instead participate in painful attacks directed against the American homeland, the failure of the United States to defuse Islamic resentment threatens to become very costly.²²⁹

Mounting Direct Operations to Defeat Terrorism and Deny It Resources

If the record with respect to identifying the threat and the best means to defeat it remains mixed, the second dimension—mounting effective direct operations to defeat terrorism and

²²⁵ Pew Global Attitudes Project, “Views of a Changing World 2003: War With Iraq Further Divides Global Publics,” June 3, 2003, available at <<http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=185>>.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror*.

²²⁸ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 374–379.

²²⁹ For more on this issue, see Graham E. Fuller, “Middle East: Confronting Resentment in the Arc of Crisis,” in Tellis and Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2004–05: Confronting Terrorism in the Pursuit of Power*, pp. 301–335.

deny it resources—is marked by significant successes, but important “incompletes” as well. The first great achievement in direct operations to defeat terrorism has been the U.S. victory over the Taliban-Al Qaeda compact in Afghanistan. The destruction of Al Qaeda’s sanctuary in Afghanistan, at relatively low cost and without the quagmire that Osama bin Laden expected to inveigle the United States into, is significant because it eliminated the organization’s most attractive base for planning, recruitment, training, operations, and recovery. Further, there has been progress in apprehending or killing senior leaders of the organization. By President Bush’s account, “more than three quarters of Al Qaeda’s key members and associates have been detained or killed.”²³⁰ Because the individuals neutralized have been crucial participants in past Al Qaeda attacks, there is little doubt that the group has been hurt and its operations interrupted as a result of U.S. counterterrorism operations. Whether this represents a fatal weakening of Al Qaeda, however, remains a source of lively controversy.²³¹ This debate notwithstanding, the fact remains that the organization’s core senior leadership consisting of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri has still not been apprehended, though their planning and operations must of necessity be conducted either on the run or from transient hideouts in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, where they remain under pressure from joint U.S.-Pakistani counterterrorism operations.

Unfortunately, the great advantage that the United States gained from evicting the Taliban-Al Qaeda regime from Afghanistan has not yet been consolidated, even though the new Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai has overseen important steps toward taking the country back to stability. Successes here include developing a consensual transition plan toward democracy under UN aegis (including a free and successful presidential election), gaining international support for national reconstruction, and involving U.S. and multinational forces in modest peacekeeping and rebuilding missions. Major tasks that remain incomplete—and which sometimes cast a dark shadow on the success of the enterprise—relate to extending central authority throughout the country, disarming and integrating the various warlords (some embedded in positions of state authority), curbing the debilitating upsurge in narcotics production, securing a substantial NATO commitment toward peacemaking, and completing the economic reconstruction program fast enough to earn the Afghan moderates strengthened legitimacy.²³²

²³⁰ Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball, “Catching Al Qaeda,” *Newsweek*, September 8, 2004, available at <<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/5945061/site/newsweek/>>.

²³¹ For an excellent review of this issue, see Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Al Qaeda after the Iraq Conflict,” *CRS Report for Congress*, May 23, 2003.

²³² For an excellent survey of the current state of Afghan reconstruction efforts, see General Accounting Office, *Afghanistan Reconstruction*, GAO-04-403, Washington, D.C.: June 2004.

Towering above all, however, appears to be a precarious security situation caused by factional feuds, personal and ethnic rivalries, drug-related incidents, weak or corrupt provincial and district administrations, continued rule by local commanders, and the absence of effective national law enforcement in addition to the problem of terrorist violence associated with the reconstitution of the Taliban and Al Qaeda cadres in the northwestern areas of Pakistan.²³³ These remnants of the old regime, defeated but not destroyed, seek to create enough mayhem to unsettle the Karzai government, aggravate Afghanistan's ethnic imbalances, and ultimately evict Western forces from the country.

The problem of Taliban resurgence, while specific to the complications in Afghanistan, illuminates a larger problem facing the United States, namely the challenge of confronting "double dealers who seek U.S. favor but still countenance terrorism in their midst."²³⁴ In the case of the Taliban, the double-dealer in question is Pakistan, or more precisely the military regime of General Musharraf. As Walter Andersen has pointed out, for a complex mixture of reasons—ongoing competition with India, a desire to fix Afghanistan in Islamabad's sphere of influence, prolonging the struggle against Al Qaeda for economic and military benefits accruing to Pakistan, a continuing suspicion of long-term U.S. interests in South Asia, and the exigencies of domestic survival—Musharraf continues to play both the United States and the Taliban.²³⁵ This has led another American commentator to conclude that Washington should view Islamabad "as a reluctant supporter of U.S. goals at best and as a potential long-term problem at worst."²³⁶

This problem of double-dealing, where Pakistan is only an archetype of those entities that are both part of the problem and part of the solution simultaneously, is endemic to the U.S.-led war on terrorism. President Yasir Arafat's leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Saudi monarchy, and the Lebanese, Syrian, and Iranian regimes are other prominent examples of such double-dealers. In every case, these players are themselves threatened by terrorism of different stripes; all seek some kind of support, if not assistance, from the United States in the war on terrorism, yet each finds it convenient in different ways to acquiesce, if not promote, some brands of terrorism in order to either bring their adversaries to heel or defuse opposition that might otherwise be directed at themselves.

²³³ United Nations, "The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General," A/58/742-S/2004/230 4, pt. 8, March 19, 2004; Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, *Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan*, AREU Briefing Paper, June 2004; Scott Baldauf and Owais Tohid, "Taliban Appears to be Regrouped and Well-funded," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 8, 2003.

²³⁴ Levitt, "War on Terrorism Scorecard," p. 39.

²³⁵ Andersen, "South Asia: A Selective War on Terrorism?" pp. 227–259.

²³⁶ Leon T. Hadar, "Pakistan in America's War against Terrorism: Strategic Ally or Unreliable Client?" *Cato Policy Analysis*, no. 436, May 8, 2002, p. 1.

In cases where double-dealers are judged to be basically friendly, the Bush administration has adopted a “pressure in private, praise in public” policy. When double-dealers are generally unfriendly, the policy has been largely reversed, with public pressure supplemented episodically by low-key, private inducements. Thus far neither approach appears to have succeeded completely. In fact, what seems to motivate double-dealers to reconsider their duplicitous policies more than any other is when their erstwhile terrorist protégés begin to turn upon them. Thus, the Saudi monarchy initiated resolute action against domestic supporters of terrorist groups only when the latter began to wreak their disasters within the kingdom. Similarly, General Musharraf began to reconsider his support for officially supported *jihadi* groups only after these elements began to target him and senior Pakistani army officers personally. As is often the case with such recalcitrant conversions, however, double-dealing regimes often do not make a clean break with their terrorist agents, hoping against hope that the latter can be somehow controlled and shaped into malleable instruments of state policy.

What has made the Saudi and Pakistani cases particularly problematic, however, is that the United States is dependent on both regimes for variety of reasons: the former remains the fulcrum of U.S. efforts to maintain stability in the Persian Gulf and secure reliable access to oil, whereas the latter is vital to efforts to apprehend Osama bin Laden and his cohorts in the rugged hideouts of northwestern Pakistan. Accordingly, both regimes enjoy more latitude than usual with respect to double-dealing, and the Bush administration—despite much angst and diplomatic pressure—has been unable to press these states to completely transform their policies in a manner consistent with President Bush’s rhetoric.

If despite its shortcomings Afghanistan is emblematic of much that is right with direct action against terrorism, few analysts today would assert the same about Iraq. The Bush administration eventually justified the military action against Saddam Hussein on the grounds that he possessed weapons of mass destruction, which in the post-September 11 environment raised fears about the use of such weapons against American interests either directly or through Iraq’s connections with Al Qaeda. Today, both these rationales for preemptive war have been severely undermined by the failure to find the WMD stockpiles Hussein is supposed to have possessed,²³⁷ and by the growing realization that Iraq’s “operational relationship” with terror-

²³⁷ David Kay, Testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, January 28, 2004, available at <www.globalresearch.ca/articles/KAY401A.html>. The definitive findings on this subject are contained in the *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD*, September 30, 2004, available at <www.cia.gov/cia/reports/iraq_wmd_2004/>.

ist groups such as Al Qaeda was at best tenuous.²³⁸ To complicate matters further, it now appears as if the decision to go to war was shaped greatly by both erroneous and distorted intelligence assessments presented by the Central Intelligence Agency.²³⁹

Despite these facts, there were arguably good reasons for pursuing regime change in Iraq, as even the Clinton administration concluded in the final months of its term. The fact that Saddam Hussein continued to harbor an interest in reconstituting Iraq's WMD programs; that these programs were temporarily arrested only because of a UN-supported sanctions regime that was rapidly fraying; that the U.S.-led coercive enforcement effort was judged to cost close to what a war with Iraq might have; and that Saddam Hussein represented a long-term threat to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and, by extension, to U.S. interests in the Middle East, all taken together, could be used to justify the use of military force against Baghdad. These arguments admittedly better validate a preventive (as opposed to a preemptive) war, but the former can be defended more cogently on the basis of a larger U.S. grand strategy aimed at cementing global primacy and maintaining long-term regional stability than on the more narrow justification of a war against terrorism.²⁴⁰

Crafting a persuasive argument in support of preventive war, however, would have been very difficult, especially if such a rationale had to satisfy multiple audiences—the American public, the international community, traditional allies, and the Muslim populations of the Arab world—simultaneously. Moreover, the legal justification for a resumption of conflict against Iraq lay in the UN Resolution 1441 which, succeeding other UN Resolutions dating back to 1990, made an Iraqi failure to demonstrably eliminate its WMD stockpiles the most relevant *casus belli* outside of deliberate aggression. Since the Bush administration accordingly chose to justify the war against Iraq on this basis—a view only strengthened by fears that Iraq's

²³⁸ Walter Pincus, "Report Cast Doubt on Iraq-Al Qaeda Connection," *The Washington Post*, June 22, 2003; R. Jeffrey Smith, "'Operational Relationship' With Al Qaeda Discounted," *The Washington Post*, July 23, 2004. A definitive refutation of the Iraqi-Al Qaeda relationship can be found in *The 9/11 Commission Report*.

²³⁹ Dana Priest, "Report Says CIA Distorted Iraq Data: Senate Panel Cites Exaggerations in Paper Made Public in 2002," *The Washington Post*, July 12, 2004; Senate Committee on Intelligence, *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq*, Washington, D.C.: United States Senate, July 7, 2004; Joseph Cirincione, et al., *WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications*.

²⁴⁰ For an analysis of Iraq as a preventive war, see James A. Russell and James J. Wirtz, "Preventive War against Iraq," *Strategic Insights*, vol. 1, no. 9 (November 2002). The notion that preventive wars are justifiable in a political or moral sense is obviously controversial. For more, see Demetrios James Caraley, ed., *American Hegemony: Preventive War, Iraq, and Imposing Democracy*, New York: APS Books, 2004; David J. Luban, "Preventive War," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, vol. 32, no. 3 (2004), pp. 207–248; George Weigel, "Moral Clarity in a Time of War," *First Things*, vol. 128 (January 2003), pp. 20–27.

unconventional weapons might be used to support global terrorism—the legitimacy of the conflict quickly became suspect when the post-war facts on the ground began to confound the administration’s claims.

More problematically, however, the failure to secure an international consensus (including assistance from most of America’s traditional allies) prior to the war, coupled with several bad decisions made both in Washington and at the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad

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during the post-war occupation, have resulted in Iraq becoming a magnet for international terrorism rather than a coup de grace against it.²⁴¹ Even worse, it has undermined confidence in core elements of the president’s approach to the war on terrorism: the importance of acting preemptively when necessary; creating a “coalition of the willing” in the face of resistance by allies or the United Nations; confronting Iraq as the cornerstone of global terrorism; and, transforming Baghdad into a democ-

racy to catalyze regionwide change in the greater Middle East.²⁴² Although many of these components will survive the Iraqi crisis in one form or another, given the problems that the United States is likely to face as a hegemonic power over the long term, they will nonetheless be the object of great suspicion—at least in the foreseeable future—not because they are inherently problematic but because they may have been applied inappropriately in this case and, at any rate, without requisite preparation.

At this point, therefore, it is hard to conclude that, despite the many benefits of removing Saddam Hussein from power for larger U.S. geopolitical interests in the Middle East, the war in Iraq represents a net plus for the United States in its battle against terrorism. At some point in the future—if violence in Iraq attenuates sufficiently, a democratic dispensation takes root, the Iraqi economy is revitalized, and Iraq’s territorial integrity is preserved—this judgment may

²⁴¹ Cofer Black, “Al-Qaida: The Threat to the United States and Its Allies,” Testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Washington, D.C., April 1, 2004. Some of the problematic decisions at the Coalition Provisional Authority have been described in Larry Diamond, “What Went Wrong in Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 5 (September/October 2004), pp. 34–56. Describing the errors made in Washington must await declassification of documents and the consequent verdict of historians.

²⁴² Robin Wright, “Iraq Occupation Erodes Bush Doctrine,” *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2004; for an academic analysis of the Bush doctrine, its strengths, and limits, see Robert Jervis, “Understanding the Bush Doctrine,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 118, no. 3 (Fall 2003), pp. 365–388.

be revised, but as things stand only the most optimistic accounts would treat the current situation in Iraq as conducive to success in the larger war against terrorism. In fact, if the present conflagration in Iraq extends beyond its borders to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the other vulnerable neighboring states, even the larger geopolitical benefits of Saddam's removal will be negated. And if the Iraqi crisis ends up denuding Washington of the political willingness and the military capability to confront other, possibly more serious, threats to U.S. global interests such as Iran and North Korea, then Operation Iraqi Freedom will have turned out to be even more costly from the perspective of preserving U.S. primacy than it appears at first sight. If these liabilities are compounded at home by a return to high and rising budget deficits, anemic economic performance, constricted civil liberties, increased threats to homeland security, and a heightened loss of political confidence in Washington's capacity for leadership, then the final costs of the Iraqi war will have turned out to be very high indeed.

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On a brighter note, however, the Bush administration's efforts to directly attack terrorism and deny it resources have borne fruit in three important areas. In contrast to previous efforts, which have been episodic and disjointed, the administration has developed a comprehensive strategy for attacking major terrorist groups worldwide.²⁴³ This response was no doubt forced by the ferocity of the September 11 attacks, and has included using diplomacy to create a better understanding of the terrorist threat; cooperatively interdicting terrorist financing; revitalizing law enforcement cooperation with key states by creating a list of foreign terrorist organizations, increasing the global sharing of law enforcement information, and implementing tough new antiterrorism laws; creating (after much initial opposition) a Department of Homeland Security to improve border and transportation security, protect critical infrastructure, and improve local capacity to respond to chemical and biological threats; and, in a more controversial solution, enacting the USA Patriot Act to provide legal cover for federal efforts aimed at tracking and disrupting terrorist cells. Many of these efforts are still incomplete, and some suffer from internal incoherence. This has led many specialists to conclude that although the nation is safer today, it is still not safe enough because structural vulnerabilities continue to

²⁴³ See The White House, *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism*, Washington, D.C., September 10, 2003, for a useful overview of the Bush administration's efforts. See also "Protecting the Homeland," in *The White House, President George W. Bush: A Remarkable Record of Achievement*, Washington, D.C., August 2004, pp. 15–18, for a catalog of the administration's initiatives.

beset the country's vital infrastructure.²⁴⁴ Remediating these weaknesses, however, represents a substantial task and will take many years to complete. Although many criticisms of the administration are well founded, it nonetheless deserves credit for grappling with the issue of defending against terrorism comprehensively, even if much work still remains to be done.²⁴⁵

A second achievement is that the Bush administration has managed to secure and maintain the support of key Asian governments in its war against terrorism. Even on as controversial and vexing an issue as Iraq, the administration initially secured troop contributions from Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia, despite much public opposition

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in many of these countries. It came close to persuading India to contribute troops as well, although this effort was ultimately unsuccessful in part because of the exigencies of Indian domestic politics. Beyond the Iraq war, U.S.-Asian relations have been revitalized as a result of the broader war on terrorism. As Robert Hathaway noted, "September 11 shook up old alignments and relationships throughout Asia, as each of the region's countries

was forced to rethink its ties to an angry and assertive American nation intent upon defeating the scourge of terrorism . . . Japan, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines, all formal alliance partners, have experienced new levels of consultation and cooperation with Washington in the aftermath of 9/11, as have Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other Asian countries not formally allied with the United States."²⁴⁶ Even more interestingly, the administration's focus on terrorism has resulted in almost every major Asian country—Japan, Russia, China, and India—reorienting its grand strategy to exploit the common opposition to terrorism to improve its relations with the United States. Relations within important dyads, China and the United States, Russia and the United States, China and Japan, China and India, and India and Pakistan have also improved, spurred on partly by concerns about terrorism.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Stephen Flynn, *America the Vulnerable*, New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

²⁴⁵ Daniel A. Lindley, *The Campaign Against Terrorism*, Kroc Institute Occasional Paper No. 22:OP:1, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, April 2002. The most prominent dissenting view about the Bush administration's performance remains Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*.

²⁴⁶ Robert M. Hathaway, "Introduction," in Robert M. Hathaway and Wilson Lee, *George W. Bush and Asia: A Midterm Assessment*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2003, pp. 5–6.

²⁴⁷ The limits of the current Indo-Pakistani rapprochement are discussed in *India and Pakistan: Is Peace Real this Time? A Conversation Between Husain Haqqani and Ashley J. Tellis*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004.

Finally, and irrespective of what role the United Nations eventually plays in the international struggle against terrorism, the administration's emphasis on defeating this threat has animated both European and Asian states to explore regional multilateral mechanisms for dealing with this challenge. In Europe, for example, the G-8 has focused on developing guidelines and best practices to improve the security of travel documents, which are now draft international standards adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization. Successive U.S.-EU summits, similarly, have provided new commitments to disrupt terrorist access to financial and other economic resources; improve joint capacities to detect, investigate, and prosecute terrorists and to prevent and/or mitigate terrorist attacks; increase security of international transportation and develop effective systems of border control; and reach out to key developing countries where counterterrorism capacity or commitment to combating terrorism needs to be enhanced.²⁴⁸

Although comparable levels of cooperation have not yet occurred in Asia, the U.S. emphasis on defeating terrorism has spurred various regional organizations to revisit the issue of multilateral cooperation in counterterrorism. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), for example, created in January 2004 a new permanent organ based in Tashkent, the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), to coordinate member activities against terrorism, separatism, and extremism. This is particularly significant because the SCO originally failed to respond with a common voice to the September 11 attacks and until recently did not take the threat of terrorism seriously enough to act collectively in response.²⁴⁹ Similarly, antiterrorism cooperation has become an issue of significance among the Asia-Pacific states through the activities of the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. The latter organization in particular—partly to ward off increasing U.S. pressure and partly because of the need to defeat terrorism before it undermines the regional trade and commerce that drives Asian growth—has created a counterterrorism task force that has taken the lead in developing measures to protect cargo (especially container security), ships, international aviation, and people in transit; interdict regional financial transfers that support terrorism;

²⁴⁸ For a good survey of these activities, see William Pope, Testimony to the House International Relations Committee, Principal Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State, September 14, 2004, available at <usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2004/Sep/17-729854.html>. See also Philippe Coessens, "At Least in Fighting Terrorism, Transatlantic Cooperation is Working," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (March 2004), pp. 15–18.

²⁴⁹ Tang Shiping, "Anti-terror Body not a Dead Duck Just Yet: Future of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation," *Straits Times*, October 12, 2002.

and promote cyber security.²⁵⁰ These activities, in turn, have led to discussions about the need for establishing a formal multilateral security organization that would integrate existing regional and subregional security bodies into a broader Asian security architecture, even though movement toward such a unified grouping would be halting and incremental at best.²⁵¹

Developing a Grand Strategy to Defeat Terrorism

The third dimension in the war on terrorism and one that is fundamental to its long-term success is developing an appropriate grand strategy to defeat terrorism. This is another area where the United States has not done as well as it should. In fact, it would not be too far off the mark to say that with the exception of President Bush personally and a few senior White House and State Department officials, the administration has not really engaged this issue. A note of caution is appropriate here: given the varieties of terrorism today, each with its own peculiarities and specific causes, it is impossible to craft a grand strategy for defeating terrorism writ large. Rather, what is needed is a plan for addressing the most important kind of terrorism confronting the United States today at the practical level, namely the transregional discontent that wraps itself in the symbols and idioms of Islam and is located along a vast geographic swath stretching from Asia through the Middle East to North Africa. Developing such a grand strategy does not require the United States to formally identify Islamist terrorism as the principal threat. Such identification would be both unhelpful and counter-productive. Rather, what is needed is a sophisticated approach that, while sensitive to national differences, builds upon the most appealing—and universal—elements of the American experience: the respect for persons; political, economic, and cultural freedom; and the rule of law.²⁵²

If tactical counterterrorism operations focus on defeating terrorist states, terrorist groups of global reach, and national terrorisms as appropriate, the objective of a grand strategy would be to first differentiate actual terrorists from their more numerous sympathizers, and then

²⁵⁰ An overview of APEC counterterrorism activities can be found in “Summary of Main APEC Counter Terrorism Activities,” available at <www.dfat.gov.au/apec/terrorism/apec_ct_activities.html>. Details on specific initiatives are available at <www.apec.org/content/apec/apec_groups/som_special_task_groups/counter_terrorism.html>.

²⁵¹ See the discussion in the proceedings of the *International Conference on International Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Cooperation*, Shanghai, China, November 14–16, 2002, and available at <www.icasinc.org/lectures/sass/sass.html>; John Miller, *The Roots and Implications of East Asian Regionalism*, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper, September 2004.

²⁵² An excellent survey of the key issues implicated here can be found in Kurt M. Campbell, ed., *In Search of an American Grand Strategy for the Middle East*, Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, 2004.

marginalize the former and thus ultimately defeat them.²⁵³ The strategy, accordingly, would address the long-term challenge of how to prevent millions of disaffected Muslims throughout the world from seeking redress for their grievances through violence as opposed to through the mechanisms of normal politics.²⁵⁴

Developing a strategy of this sort will require great intellectual effort on the part of the administration, U.S. allies, and the West at large. It will also require a willingness to confront squarely shortcomings in current U.S. policy, to the degree that these failures contribute to the legitimation of armed Islamist resistance. Above all, it will require a vision that is integrative, one that addresses the political, economic, social, and ideological drivers of dissatisfaction in the contemporary Muslim world.

No grand strategy of this sort exists today. To his credit, President Bush has attempted to begin an alliance-wide discussion about such a strategy by proposing a vision of Middle East transformation (now called the Broader Middle East and North Africa, or BMENA, Initiative).²⁵⁵ Based on a diagnosis of shortcomings identified in the 2002 *Arab Human Development Report*, Bush's idea focused on promoting democratic reform and good governance, increasing economic opportunity, and building a knowledge society that would, among other things, empower ordinary citizens and strengthen women's rights. The assumption underlying this effort was that popular dissatisfaction in the Middle East is fundamentally rooted in the problematic relationship existing between various governing regimes and their populations in the Muslim world. While this supposition is largely accurate, the president's vision has thus far not acquired the traction it deserves for multiple reasons.

To begin with, any serious strategy directed at the transformation of the Middle East will be a long, drawn-out effort likely to span several generations. The president has publicly under-

²⁵³ This point was emphasized most cogently by Philippe Errera in his presentation on "Thinking About the Struggle Against Terrorism after Iraq," at the International Institute for Strategic Studies Conference on Rebuilding the Transatlantic Relationship, London, June 17, 2004.

²⁵⁴ For a superb statement by a Bush administration official on the centrality of democratization in the Muslim world to this process (and its limits), see Richard N. Haass, "Towards Greater Democracy in the Muslim World," Remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., December 4, 2002, available at <www.state.gov/s/p/rem/15686.htm>.

²⁵⁵ The White House, "President Bush Presses for Peace in the Middle East," Remarks by the President in Commencement Address at the University of South Carolina, May 9, 2003; The White House, "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East," Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, D.C., November 6, 2003; The White House, "President Bush Discusses Iraq Policy at Whitehall Palace in London," Remarks by the President at Whitehall Palace, London, November 19, 2003.

scored this fact.²⁵⁶ Yet it is not obvious that, at this point in time, the United States has the stomach for a major political obligation to transform an entire region of the globe containing a huge, alienated population, suffering great poverty and inequality, holding a contested relationship with modernity, and with which it shares few historical or consanguineous ties. For all the administration's desire to promote Middle East transformation, therefore, there is still no evidence of a bipartisan commitment in Congress to support such an endeavor, as there was in an earlier generation of legislators for the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe. The public interest in this initiative has also been conspicuously minimal. Finally (but not surprisingly given the preceding facts), the administration has not proposed any significant funding in support of the BMENA Initiative. During the four years in which the Marshall Plan was formally in operation, for example, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$13.3 billion (in 1948–52 dollars) to European reconstruction.²⁵⁷ In contrast, the administration's commitment to the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI/BMENA) has to date not exceeded \$145 million, an amount that has been criticized as "tokenism compared to other U.S. national security commitments in the region."²⁵⁸ Regrettably even this modest funding has been the subject of much wrangling in the U.S. Congress.

The president's effort to develop a grand strategy aimed at defeating terror via transforming the Middle East has also run into other kinds of problems.

First, the European allies, whose cooperation would be vital to implementing any successful grand strategy against terrorism, reacted somewhat coolly to the Bush initiative. This response derived, in part, from trans-Atlantic tensions with the administration over its conduct in Iraq. It was also driven by a suspicion that what the president was proposing—programs to strengthen the electoral process, train parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, and journalists, reform the judiciary, and animate civil society—was little other than a warmed over version of what the Europeans themselves had initiated through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative in 1995.²⁵⁹ Consequently, most Atlantic allies, while welcoming the new U.S.

²⁵⁶ For example, see "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East." National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice also corroborated this judgment when she declared: "The Middle East is a region of tremendous potential. Yet achieving real transformation in the Middle East will require a commitment of many years. It will require America and our allies to engage broadly throughout the region, across many fronts, including diplomatic, economic, and cultural." See The White House, Remarks by Condoleezza Rice, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Chicago, October 8, 2003.

²⁵⁷ "For European Recovery," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, June 23, 1997.

²⁵⁸ Jeremy M. Sharp, "The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview," *CRS Report for Congress*, July 23, 2003, p. 3.

²⁵⁹ Details about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including the regional strategy papers and the program, can be found at <europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/rsp/index.htm>. For more on the contemporary European response, see "U.S.-EU-Turkey Cooperation on the Broader Middle East and North Africa: A Strategic Dialogue," The Nixon Center, Washington D.C., Program Brief, 10:16, pp. 1–4.

willingness to confront the structural problems giving rise to terrorism, did little more than offer polite support to this proposal—even though they intuitively appreciate the importance of the BMENA Initiative.

Second, the Middle Eastern states themselves were not enthusiastic about the president's ideas for reform.²⁶⁰ This disenchantment arose partly from issues of process. Most Arab states first learned of this initiative not through a private intimation by the U.S. government, but as a result of leaked documents that were to have been unveiled at the June 2004 G–8 summit meeting at Sea Island, Georgia. Fearing that this approach cast them as objects rather than as partners in Middle East reform, most Arab states reacted viscerally to what they perceived was yet another imperial plan about to be foisted on the region without prior consultation.²⁶¹ Other fundamental problems were implicated here as well. Most authoritarian regimes could be expected to tolerate modest reform measures that might burnish their internal legitimacy and their external standing, but there is no reason to presume that they would support serious reforms that threaten to divest them of real power over their states—unless, of course, they were either coerced by superior power or suborned by phenomenal blandishments, neither of which appeared in the president's plan.

Finally, and most importantly, President Bush's Middle East transformation initiative did not address what is clearly the core problem with any U.S. grand strategy aimed at defeating Islamist terrorism by reforming retrograde Arab regimes, namely, U.S. dependence on these entities for larger power-political purposes. Whether these interests be the free flow of energy or denying others a preponderant influence in the Middle East, the American reliance on authoritarian regimes to protect these equities has created painful dilemmas that cannot be easily resolved.²⁶²

The sustained protection of authoritarian clients has over time given rise to growing resentment against both these local sovereigns and their superpower protector. In the post-Cold War era, this opposition has materialized in the form of terrorist acts wrapped in Islamic trappings, since Islam provides a convenient and accessible idiom for large, disenfranchised popu-

²⁶⁰ Steven R. Weisman, "Bush Plan for Group of 8 to Hail Democracy in the Middle East Strains Ties With Arab Allies," *The New York Times*, June 6, 2004.

²⁶¹ Steven R. Weisman and Neil MacFarquhar, "U.S. Plan for Mideast Reform Draws Ire of Arab Leaders," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2004; Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Doesn't Seek to Impose Reforms, Powell Tells Kuwaitis and Saudis," *The New York Times*, March 21, 2004.

²⁶² For a superb analysis of this dilemma, see Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, *The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start*, Policy Brief No. 29, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2004.

Flations to express their antipathy toward both adversaries simultaneously. As President Bush instinctively appreciates, disarming these millions of Islamist sympathizers in the Middle East—even as the United States attacks the terrorists directly—would require greater democratization, equity, and enlightenment in these polities.²⁶³ This, however, implies that the current ruling elites, who are U.S. clients, could lose their power, with all the accompanying consequences for larger American interests. Risking the loss of reliable, even if somewhat unsavory, clients who provide immediate strategic benefits—uninterrupted access to oil—for the uncertain, and at best long-term, gains accruing from the spread of democratic politics in the Middle East remains a structural predicament that no U.S. administration has thus far been able to resolve.

Even President Bush—who is known to personally hold the view that democratic states are better long-term bets despite the political complications they may cause as a result of possible near-term opposition to American policies—has been unable to strike boldly in policy terms by demanding genuine reform even if it risks the loss of key client regimes.²⁶⁴ Consequently, he too is condemned to settle for palliatives that will fail to arrest the growth of Islamist sympathizers throughout the Middle East while simultaneously doing “little of consequence to advance what is at the heart of the regional transformation that the United States says it wants—democratization.”²⁶⁵

While these limitations of the current initiative are real, the course of action the president has initiated is potentially revolutionary for three reasons. First, it represents an important ideational victory over the traditional views dominant in the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, which held that democracy promotion in the Middle East ought to enjoy lesser priority given larger U.S. interests in the region. Second, it affirms the proposition that illiberal Arab regimes *must* reform if they are to cease posing a threat both to themselves and to U.S. security over the long term—even if the administration has not yet found the right mix of instruments to induce such transformation successfully in the near-term. Third, the president’s intention to pursue democratization in the Middle East represents a new and vital bureaucratic asset to those people within the administration who believe in the importance of democracy promotion and, accordingly, remains a potent device that, if used effectively, can set the agendas and shape the debates within the U.S. government over the next steps in the region.

²⁶³ Mike Allen, “Bush Chides U.S. Allies In Mideast: In Speech, He Exhorts Move to Democracy,” *The Washington Post*, June 30, 2004.

²⁶⁴ As Ottaway and Carothers, *The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start*, pp. 3–4, note, “What is missing from the political component of the planned initiative is any recognition of the kinds of crucial political steps that the nondemocratic countries of the region will need to take to launch genuine processes of democratization; also missing is some indication of what the G-8 countries are willing to do, in terms of either carrots or sticks, to help induce such steps.”

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Despite these advantages, the obstacles to creating a new, moderate political order in the Islamic world—both within and outside the Middle East—are enormous and cannot be underestimated.²⁶⁶ Developing a grand strategy to defeat Islamist terrorism will, therefore, be a tricky and difficult business. It is not certain that the United States in practice will be able to develop one, let alone implement it.²⁶⁷ Yet, without such a comprehensive vision of political change and the willingness to execute it, the battle to prevent the large mass of Muslim sympathizers from slowly gravitating toward active terrorism will surely be lost. Moreover, that defeat will ineluctably subvert success in the war against terrorism itself.²⁶⁸ As the administration contemplates this painful fact, two elements in particular deserve special attention, one that can be influenced by the United States, the other perhaps less so.

The obstacles to creating a new, moderate political order in the Islamic world—both within and outside the Middle East—are enormous and cannot be underestimated.

The issue that demands greater American attention, and perhaps a better strategy, is the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In theory, the issue of Middle East transformation can proceed apart from any progress on the Palestinian problem, but in practice, this is chimerical. The Palestinian crisis is such a catalyzing issue in Muslim politics because it lies at the intersection of multiple problems, such as the rights of a dispossessed people, U.S. support for Israel, Israel's security and internal stability, the cold war between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and the larger questions of "civilizational" relations between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. This is not to imply that the Muslim populations of the Arab world or their rulers have deep commitments to the Palestinian cause. To the contrary, as Michael Doran aptly put it, "although Palestine is central to the symbolism of Arab politics, it is actually marginal to its substance."²⁶⁹ That fact, however, does not make it any less important because as Doran himself admits, "Palestine-as-symbol has a protean nature, a capacity for expressing grievances wholly unrelated to the aspirations of the Palestinians themselves."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ For a sobering review of these challenges, see the discussion in Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004. See also Philip H. Gordon, "Bush's Middle East Vision," *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 155–165.

²⁶⁷ For a first cut at how the United States might be able to pursue peace, reform, and security in the Middle East simultaneously, see Michele Durocher Dunne, "Integrating Democracy Promotion into U.S. Middle East Policy," *Carnegie Papers*, no. 50 (October 2004).

²⁶⁸ This is a point emphasized in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 361–398.

²⁶⁹ Michael Scott Doran, "Palestine, Iraq, and American Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 1 (January/February 2003), p. 20.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Consequently no attempt at defusing Muslim resentment against the United States is likely to be effective without better approaches to managing the Israeli-Palestinian problem. This is easier said than done. On one hand, Israel (and the United States) has indeed been a victim of Palestinian terrorism. Washington cannot as a matter of strategic and moral necessity prevent the Israeli state from defending itself against such violence. Moreover, past Israeli governments have made serious efforts to reach out to the Palestinians as, for example, during the intense Israeli-Palestinian dialogue conducted during the Clinton administration. In this encounter, however, the late Yasir Arafat showed himself unable to grasp the opportunities lying before him, and preferred instead to opt for renewed bargaining through the medium of violence.²⁷¹

Given this recent history, the room for maneuver in what the United States can demand of Israel is necessarily limited, but Washington should continue to emphasize at least three elements in the near-term: an end to any Israeli policies that involve building of settlements in the Occupied Territories; an integration of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's current unilateral decisions with the administration's roadmap; and, a repeated, demonstrable willingness to return to negotiations with the post-Arafat Palestinian leadership in order to continue the peace process. To the Palestinians and the Muslim world at large, the United States ought to emphasize more insistently its commitment to the creation of a fully sovereign Palestinian state if the Palestinian National Authority can reform itself to better control its security forces; institute genuine internal democracy of the sort that eluded it during the Arafat years; and eschew a willingness to bargain through terrorism. The United States should also commit itself to an aid program that supports education, health, and building civic institutions for the Palestinian population.

Pressing Israel to reopen negotiations with the post-Arafat Palestinian National Authority is appropriate if the new Palestinian leaders display a willingness to negotiate a conclusive settlement peacefully that, even in its most favorable variant, will require significant Palestinian compromises. If such an outcome is beyond reach, the alternative of creating a Palestinian state through the interim step of trusteeship deserves consideration.²⁷² Irrespective of whether this device or some other represents the solution, the United States has no choice but to work

²⁷¹ For more on this issue, see Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 48, no. 13, August 9, 2001, and especially the correspondence that follows: Dennis Ross and Gidi Grinstein with reply by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, "Camp David: An Exchange," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 48, no. 14, September 20, 2001; and Benny Morris, "Camp David and After: An Exchange (1. An Interview with Ehud Barak)," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 49, no. 10, June 13, 2002. See also Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

²⁷² Martin Indyk, "A Trusteeship for Palestine?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 3 (May/June 2003), pp. 51–66.

toward a just settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian problem—and be seen to be doing so—if it is to neutralize Palestine as a symbol that “expresses the resistance of Arabs and Muslims to Western political and cultural hegemony.”²⁷³

The second issue that demands attention and must be addressed primarily by Muslims themselves is Islam’s own relationship with the modern world. This is not a matter on which the United States can make a major contribution *a priori*, yet is vitally affected by it. Given the threat posed by radicalized Islam for Muslim populations in general, it is vital that issues in Islamic thought that have not been settled before—the distinction between the public and the private, the justification of violence and the conditions attaching thereto, the relationship between religion and the state in a multireligious universe—be addressed and debated anew.²⁷⁴ Success in this endeavor will depend greatly on the ability of Muslims to recover the tradition of *ijtihad*, which involves creatively “working with the sources of dogma” to “steer a new course for Islam and Islamic Law, a course that stays within the boundary of Islamic tradition, but at the same time avoids the blindness of simply imitating earlier scholars, without consideration of the changing conditions of society.”²⁷⁵

As Goh Chok Tong, former prime minister of Singapore and one of the strongest U.S. allies in Asia argued, “this ideological struggle is far more complex than the struggle against communism because it engages not just reason but religious faith . . . non-Muslims have no *locus standi* to engage in this struggle for the soul of Islam. It is a matter for Muslims to settle among themselves.”²⁷⁶ While Muslims no doubt have to settle this issue among themselves, there may be ways in which the United States and the West more generally can assist them *a posteriori*. That is, they can support—lightly and with due caution—those elements within the intra-Muslim debate that seek to achieve a new consensus between their faith, tradition, and modernity. While such backing cannot be offered in the manifestly competitive fashion common during the Cold War, the United States and its allies ought to seriously consider ways in which they can—through material means—encourage various moderate constituencies that support the revival of *ijtihad* within Islam.²⁷⁷

²⁷³ Doran, “Palestine, Iraq, and American Strategy,” p. 21.

²⁷⁴ For a good overview of these issues, see Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, New York: Modern Library, 2003.

²⁷⁵ Knut S. Vikør, “The Development of *ijtihad* and Islamic reform, 1750–1850,” paper presented at the Third Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies: Ethnic Encounter and Culture Change, Joensuu, Finland, June 19–22, 1995, and available at <www.hf-fak.uib.no/institutter/smi/paj/Vikor.html#fn1>.

²⁷⁶ Goh Chok Tong, “Beyond Madrid: Winning Against Terrorism,” Address to the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., May 6, 2004, official transcript, p. 6.

²⁷⁷ For an excellent first cut at this issue, see Cheryl Bernard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2003.

Conclusion: Long-Term Implications of the War on Terrorism for U.S. Grand Strategy

Although public attention has been dominated by the war on terrorism, in part shaped by the administration's own rhetoric on this issue, the fact remains that the Bush presidency has attempted to manage simultaneously two very different challenges during its first term: defending against a global terrorist insurgency and laying the foundation for protecting U.S. primacy

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well into the future. Accordingly the administration ought to be judged by both these yardsticks because tragic though they were, the September 11 attacks have neither affected the core position of the United States in the international system nor erased other, more enduring problems of high politics. When viewed in this fashion, there emerges a complex, but contingently positive, picture of the

administration's achievements. In the war on terrorism itself, there have been some vital successes, many incomplete (although still continuing) endeavors, and a few failures. On matters on grand strategy, there have been important shortcomings but also significant successes. Unfortunately many of the latter have been unobtrusive, taken for granted, or overshadowed by the controversies engendered by the administration's approach to Iraq.

As one looks to the future, then, three distinct sets of challenges lie ahead in regard to the war on terrorism, understood narrowly and apart from the co-relevant issues of grand strategy.

The first will be completing the destruction of Al Qaeda remnants in Pakistan, to include as a priority the apprehension or killing of Osama bin Laden and his immediate cohort. The administration, in collaboration with the government of Pakistan, is currently pursuing these elements hiding in the mountains along the Afghan-Pakistani border. Poor Pakistani operational security, questionable counterterrorism tactics, political hesitancy in conducting aggressive operations against former Taliban cadres intermixed with the Al Qaeda membership, and failures in U.S.-Pakistani cooperation, however, have episodically compromised the effort.²⁷⁸ This mission nonetheless must be brought to a successful close. Although killing or capturing

²⁷⁸ Ahmed Rashid, "Friends of the Taliban," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 11, 2003, p. 20; Pamela Constable, "Pakistan's Uneasy Role in Terror War; Conciliatory Approach to Tribal and Foreign Fighters Leaves U.S. Officials Frustrated," *The Washington Post*, May 8, 2004; David Rohde and Mohammed Khan, "Militant's Defiance Puts Pakistan's Resolve in Doubt," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2004.

bin Laden and his top lieutenants alone will not eliminate transnational Islamist terrorism, destroying Al Qaeda's charismatic leadership is vital to the objective of pushing back this brand of international terrorism to the criminal domain.

The second task consists of completing the stability operations in Iraq. While the U.S. counterinsurgency mission is likely to persist for some time to come, two critical objectives present themselves in the near-term. The first is to complete the raising, training, and deployment of the new Iraqi security forces so as to enable the latter to combat internal terrorism with reduced reliance on coalition forces.²⁷⁹ The second is to ensure a reasonably successful Iraqi election in January 2005 in order to lay the basis for the critical Iraqi constitutional convention thereafter.²⁸⁰ If these two objectives can be attained over the next two years, the current insurgency in Iraq could lose its momentum, the level of U.S. troop presence in the country can be gradually reduced, and the vision of a stable, democratic, and federal Iraq friendly to the United States would receive a new lease on life. The difficulties along the way to these objectives, however, are enormous, and the U.S. intelligence community in particular has argued that the path to success is far more tenuous than has been publicly acknowledged by the administration.²⁸¹ This fact notwithstanding, there is no alternative at this juncture but to stand fast and persist with completing Iraqi stabilization, which, however difficult and painful it may be today, is still not hopeless or impossible. In this context the Bush administration in its second term ought to resist emerging pressures either to cut and run or to forsake democratization as a goal for post-Saddam Iraq. Both alternatives will cost the United States dearly—far more than it would gain over the long run.

The third task consists of dealing with various derivative consequences arising from the earliest rounds of the antiterrorism campaign and which have received insufficient attention thus far. This includes dealing with national terrorist groups that threaten to expand operations beyond their local confines either because of sympathy to specific Al Qaeda goals or because of their antipathy toward liberal societies. Neutralizing such groups, which would include various Kashmiri terrorist organizations, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Armed Islamic Group, the Al-Jama Al-Islamiyya, the Hizb ut-Tahrir organization and others, will require in-

²⁷⁹ For an excellent, if early, review of this issue, see International Crisis Group, *Iraq: Building a New Security Structure*, Middle East Report No. 20, December 23, 2003.

²⁸⁰ Keith W. Mines, "Iraq: the Next Stage," Foreign Policy Research Institute, E-Notes, June 28, 2004.

²⁸¹ Dana Priest and Thomas E. Ricks, "Growing Pessimism on Iraq," *The Washington Post*, September 29, 2004. An important academic study, David Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004), pp. 49–91, also remains pessimistic about the success of U.S. peacemaking efforts in Iraq.

creased collaboration with the countries affected by these threats, although that in turn brings difficult challenges if these regimes are not democratic. Further, the United States will also have to address more directly the problems caused by double-dealing allies such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, while accelerating the initial efforts already under way in developing a grand strategy for Middle East transformation. The 9/11 Commission has, for example, offered various suggestions on how to deal with Pakistan in its recent report.²⁸² Many of these are useful, but some are dubious and will only exacerbate the problem. In any event, the problems posed by Pakistan²⁸³ and Saudi Arabia²⁸⁴—and Middle East transformation—must be addressed by the second Bush administration as part of the incomplete business of the war on terrorism.

Even as the United States girds itself to deal with further challenges relating to the war on terrorism itself, the other half of its national obligation—implementing an effective grand strategy to cement U.S. primacy over the long term—presents different challenges of its own. Here too, three important sets of unfinished tasks can be discerned, each related to the other in one or more ways.

To begin with, the first task consists of developing a U.S. grand strategy that will have as its core objective increasing the acceptance of U.S. hegemony as a desirable feature of the international system. As Henry Kissinger phrased it succinctly, “American power is a fact of life; but the art of diplomacy is to translate [that] power into consensus.”²⁸⁵ Thus far, however, U.S. national security strategy has focused more on justifying the material foundations necessary to assure hegemony and elaborating how U.S. capabilities would be used to defend that primacy. It has paid less attention to the mix of policy instruments required to induce acceptance of U.S. hegemony globally. It is useful to think about the policy choices here in terms of four rank-ordered alternatives. In an ideal world, U.S. hegemony would be welcomed by the international community, which would actually contribute to its maintenance and preservation. This outcome is most unlikely in a world of competitive international politics. Consequently U.S. national strategy must be oriented toward securing at least an acceptance of U.S. primacy. If and where such acceptance proves difficult, however, U.S. policy ought to focus—as a fallback position—on keeping resistance to its power as peaceful, rule-ordered, and nonviolent as possible. If this

²⁸² These are usefully summarized in Christopher Marquis, “United States Needs to Take a Stand With Pakistan, Report Says,” *The New York Times*, July 24, 2004.

²⁸³ Alyssa Ayres, “Musharraf’s Pakistan: A Nation on the Edge,” *Current History*, vol. 103, no. 672 (April 2004), pp. 151–157; and Sumit Ganguly, “Pakistan, the Other Rogue Nation,” *Current History*, vol. 103, no. 672 (April 2004), pp. 147–150.

²⁸⁴ Michael Scott Doran, “The Saudi Paradox,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 1 (January/February 2004), pp. 35–51.

²⁸⁵ Kissinger, “Center of Gravity Shifts in International Affairs.”

strategy is successful, the fourth outcome—violent resistance—arguably would be marginalized or at least restricted to only a small, less capable, set of dissenters.

Conceptualizing this approach across multiple areas requires a revised U.S. national security strategy that elaborates a sustainable vision for preserving U.S. hegemony in the post-Iraq environment. This strategy would retain the necessity of maintaining U.S. military capabilities beyond challenge. It would also seek to “exercise power with a bland smile, not boastful words,” and may “develop its own versions of viceroys, legates, residents, and procurators.”²⁸⁶ In the end, even statesmanship may not be enough if Washington cannot convince the international community that the pursuit of its own interests ends up producing real benefits for the entire global system. A revised U.S. national security strategy, therefore, ought to place renewed emphasis on sustaining partnerships to manage international crises as well as rising challengers, bearing the costs required to resolve transnational collective action problems, and recreating a global consensus that is closely aligned with American interests on the most important issues that matter to Washington. A strategy aimed at diminishing resistance to U.S. power simply will not work if the United States is reluctant to accept as part of its burdens leading the creation of a consensus on important questions of global order and producing those global public goods that only a “privileged”²⁸⁷ entity, such as a hegemonic state, can supply.

A strategy aimed at diminishing resistance to U.S. power simply will not work if the United States is reluctant to accept as part of its burdens the creation of a consensus on important questions of global order.

The second major task facing the United States in the realm of grand strategy consists of managing the various trade-offs inherent in the war on terrorism and the long-term issues connected with maintaining U.S. primacy. The adroit fashion in which China has positioned itself vis-à-vis both the United States and Asia represents one example of how a country, although currently supportive of the U.S. war on terrorism, could expand its power in a way that could threaten American interests over the longer term.²⁸⁸ Dealing with the Iranian and

²⁸⁶ Eliot A. Cohen, “History and the Hyperpower,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 4 (July/August 2004), pp. 59, 61.

²⁸⁷ This term is used in the strict economic sense described in Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

²⁸⁸ Jane Perlez, “China Promises More Investment in Southeast Asia,” *The New York Times*, October 8, 2003; Jane Perlez, “The Charm From Beijing,” *The New York Times*, October 9, 2003; Jane Perlez, “Asian Leaders Find China a More Cordial Neighbor,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 2003; Jane Perlez, “Chinese Move to Eclipse U.S. Appeal in Southeast Asia,” *The New York Times*, November 18, 2004.

North Korean nuclear programs constitutes another example of problems that require concentrated American attention despite the ongoing crisis in Iraq. A failure to reach satisfactory solutions in both instances will create major problems for regional stability and further limit the potential utility of U.S. military power in critical areas of the globe. The shift in U.S. attitudes toward Taiwan remains a third example. In contrast to longstanding policy, which asserted that the United States took no position on the question of Taiwanese independence so long as the issue was resolved peacefully with China, the Bush administration has now formally opposed Taiwanese independence in an effort to avoid a confrontation with Beijing at a time when the United States is deeply enmeshed in Iraq.²⁸⁹ The merits of this shift are not at issue here. Rather, this discussion simply highlights the fact that the war on terrorism has forced the United States into accepting policy changes that potentially could affect larger American interests related to preserving its primacy over time. A fourth example encompasses the challenges ensuing from the administration's warm embrace of Pakistan's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf. Although linked primarily to the necessity of destroying Al Qaeda remnants in Pakistan, the administration's decision to downplay the Pakistani military's ruinous record in regard to state-sponsored terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and contempt for democracy, risks not only alienating its larger and geopolitically more important neighbor, India, but also deepening the corrosion within Pakistan in a way that, if it results ultimately in state failure, would redound violently against the United States.²⁹⁰ Managing the trade-offs between the near-term demands imposed by the war on terrorism and long-term U.S. interests thus remains an issue that will demand increased attention in the years ahead.

The third major task consists of bolstering America's economic foundations to sustain political hegemony over the long term. The United States has without a doubt the largest and most technologically advanced economy in the world. American firms continue to dominate the cycles of innovation in information technology, medicine, aerospace, biotechnology, materials sciences, transportation, and critical military technologies. Sustaining the lead in these and other emerging science and technology areas over the long term requires an effective innovation system that in turn is dependent on a positive macroeconomic environment that supports increased savings, investment, and research and development. The current weaknesses of the U.S. economy—inadequate investment in economic infrastructure, rapidly rising medical and pension costs, sizable trade deficits, a burgeoning federal deficit, stagnation of family income in

²⁸⁹ David E. Sanger, "U.S. Asks Taiwan to Avoid a Vote Provoking China," *The New York Times*, December 9, 2003; Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Cautions Taiwan on Independence; President is Warned Not to Provoke China," *The Washington Post*, April 22, 2003; Dana Milbank and Glenn Kessler, "President Warns Taiwan on Independence Efforts," *The Washington Post*, December 10, 2003; Susan Lawrence, "Bush to Chen: Don't Risk It," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 20, 2004, pp. 28–31.

²⁹⁰ Teresita C. Schaffer, *Pakistan's Future and U.S. Policy Options*, CSIS Report, March 2004.

the lower economic groups, and continuing underperformance in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education—could, if left unaddressed, lead to a progressive deterioration in American competitiveness over time.

Of particular and immediate concern are the high, rising, and yet poorly understood costs of the war on terrorism, which are likely to siphon national resources for at least the next two decades—precisely the time when new great powers such as China are likely to make their presence felt in the international system. How the United States handles the financial foundations of the war on terrorism could therefore be critical to its success in preserving political hegemony in the face of various rising challengers. It is worth remembering that power transitions in international politics occur most often because *successes* in major conflicts irreparably weaken existing hegemonies. In fact, the historical record in the modern period suggests that *no* rising challenger has thus far succeeded in supplanting a prevailing hegemony by war: Spain, France, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union all tried in different ways but failed. Despite these failures, hegemonic transitions still occurred—and this points to an important insight about the succession process in world politics that should be of concern to any U.S. administration that cares about preserving U.S. primacy: who wins in war is as important as by how much.

The costs of the war on terrorism are likely to siphon national resources for at least the next two decades—precisely the time when new great powers such as China are likely to make their presence felt in the international system.

This implies that it is insufficient for the United States to win the war on terrorism; it must win this war without enervating itself in the process. This is particularly important because the historical record suggests that it is usually the strongest surviving state in any winning coalition that becomes the new hegemon in the aftermath of a systemic war. Both Great Britain and the United States secured their hegemony in this way, the former through the wreckage of the wars with Louis XIV and with Napoleon, the latter through the wreckage of the wars with Hitler and Hirohito.²⁹¹ The war on terrorism is not a systemic war—and one hopes it will not become one—but the same cautions apply. If the United States wins this war, which it likely will, but does so at the cost of economic exhaustion thanks to ill-considered fiscal preparation, it will be confronted by the prospect of a gradual surrender of its hegemony to another power—one that conserved its resources either by not joining the extant war on terrorism or by manag-

²⁹¹ For an extended analysis, see Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2000, pp. 197–229.

ing its participation in a more prudent way. This outcome is not inevitable, but it risks materializing nonetheless if the nation believes it can continue to prosecute this massive ongoing war without anything resembling a war budget.

When all such challenges are considered in tandem, it is obvious that balancing the demands imposed by the ongoing war on terrorism and the larger issues of potential structural change in the international system—preventing the rise of hostile great powers; managing local security competitions in Asia and Europe; containing the diffusion of WMD and their delivery systems; promoting a more open global economy; and expanding democracy and the respect for liberal values—will itself become a major challenge facing U.S. policymakers in the years ahead. Even as the United States grapples with these challenges in the future, it is possible to suggest in conclusion that the war on terrorism has already highlighted six lessons that ought to be greatly relevant for future U.S. grand strategy.

First, maintaining U.S. primacy will not be a cost-free endeavor. While the reality of continuing primacy is unlikely to be called into question any time soon, the persistence of U.S. power will subsist as a magnet inviting both strategies of resistance and further attacks on the United States and its interests.²⁹² Consequently it is imperative that policymakers remain attuned to the fact that violence directed at the United States will not be simply episodic or idiosyncratic but rather part of a structural antithesis resulting from the reality of U.S. hegemony. In this context, what will be needed are ongoing strategies for preventing, confronting, and mitigating opposition. While military solutions and coercive instruments usually come first to mind, what will be equally important are ideational implements that convincingly convey that U.S. primacy, although good for the United States, can also be good for the rest of world insofar as it promotes truly universal ideals and helps resolve collective action problems of interest to all.²⁹³

Second, the debate between unilateralism and multilateralism is a spurious one in the context of managing U.S. primacy. The United States as a hegemonic power will have to act unilaterally on some occasions in defense of its vital interests. Great powers almost never have the luxury of choosing retrenchment when multilateral solutions are unavailable; for a hegemonic power, that is invariably the case. Consequently, the only issue is how ought unilateral actions to be managed in order to meet the test of legitimacy, assuming effectiveness is not at

²⁹² Betts, “The Soft Underbelly of American Primacy: Tactical Advantages of Terror.”

²⁹³ Thomas Donnelly, “What’s Next? Preserving American Primacy, Institutionalizing Unipolarity,” National Security Outlook, American Enterprise Institute, May 2003.

issue.²⁹⁴ There are no magic solutions here, but it is possible to suggest three considerations that, even if they do not eliminate the problems of unilateral action, could help to manage its consequences. First, consider unilateral action only on a very small set of issues that are truly central to the national interest and are perceived as such both within the polity and in the international community. Two, exhibit a decent consideration for world opinions by considering other alternatives to unilateral action. Three, settle for unilateral action after these alternatives have been considered and found to be inappropriate.

Third, “full-spectrum military dominance” is essential for U.S. interests both from the perspective of maintaining primacy as well as defeating terrorism. Maintaining peerless military capabilities can deter future security competition and is critical for defeating coercive threats at lowered costs and risk. A superior military force that adequately balances technology, doctrine, and training is also adaptable enough and can produce success when dealing with a range of threats with minimal organizational dislocation. Continuing the ongoing military transformation is thus essential on multiple counts, but it is equally important to recognize that even the most potent force capabilities acquired by the United States will be unable to assure perfect homeland security. Consequently, auxiliary measures like law enforcement and diplomacy, including working through international institutions, allies, and partners, will be important to manage the threat. Where mitigating covert WMD threats are concerned, increased attention to “supply-side” solutions could multiply benefits in a way that makes direct counterterrorism efforts more successful.

Fourth, enhancing American security and increasing Washington’s ability to manage the problems of international politics will require the United States to get the “big ones” right. The “big ones” in this context refer both to great powers and to great problems: successfully identifying these and developing strategies to cope with them will be vital for future success. The United States can neglect the great powers—both current and rising—only at its peril because even if these states are not genuine “peer” competitors today, their capacity for collaboration or resistance makes a great difference to which outcomes ultimately obtain in the international system. In this context, recognizing which powers are rising and hence worthy of increased American attention is itself an issue. How the United States ought to respond to them is another.²⁹⁵ Which global problems ought to receive concentrated American attention, and how

²⁹⁴ For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Julian Lindley-French, “Terms of Engagement: The paradox of American power and the transatlantic dilemma post-11 September,” *Chaillot Papers*, no. 52 (May 2002).

²⁹⁵ For a thoughtful approach to this question, see Chuck Hagel, “A Republican Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 4 (July/August 2004), pp. 64–76.

different states, especially rising powers, become relevant to each of these problems, remains a third issue that will demand ongoing consideration.

Fifth, failed, failing, and ill-governed states cannot be treated any more simply as humanitarian problems, but are potentially significant national security threats.²⁹⁶ Equally dangerous over the long term could be friendly states that are run by governments of questionable legitimacy, particularly if problems of illegitimacy and rectitude give rise to ideologically charged violence directed against the United States. Both sets of problems pose difficult challenges for future U.S. grand strategy. The former undermines the received realist wisdom on when political-military intervention is appropriate insofar as it compels the United States to consider involvement even when a country may be—by most indicators of high politics—irrelevant to U.S. grand strategic objectives. The latter raises the vexing issues of how best to press friends who are locked into shortsighted policies and under what circumstances might it be preferable to sacrifice them.

Sixth, and finally, successful realpolitik will increasingly require successful idealpolitik in the conduct of foreign policy. The conventional realist wisdom, which urged policymakers to concentrate on the external behavior of states and ignore regime character, was appropriate so long as the internal constitution of a state did not produce resentments that were exported abroad. When these dissatisfactions, however, flow beyond national boundaries and are directed toward the United States, alternatives to the Westphalian solution must be considered. The standard realist fix, however, ought not to be jettisoned if appropriate: problem states ought to be pressed to better manage their own domestic dissidents and prevent their resentments from reaching beyond their borders. There is, however, no guarantee that this approach will always work. Consequently, the sources of discontent have to be addressed. In this instance, exporting the liberal project will be increasingly essential for the security of the United States and its friends because democratic regimes can in principle provide opportunities for discontented subalterns to find solutions to their grievances within a national framework. Reducing the attractiveness of the United States as a target for attack may also be assisted by this strategy. To realize this objective, the United States “must act in ways that benefit all humanity or, at the very least, the part of humanity that shares its liberal principles . . . The United States, in short, must pursue legitimacy in the manner truest to its nature: by promoting the principles of liberal democracy not only as a means to greater security but as an end in itself.”²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Stephen M. Walt, “Beyond Bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy,” *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001/02), pp. 56–78.

²⁹⁷ Robert Kagan, “America’s Crisis of Legitimacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 2 (March/April 2004), p. 85.

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