



# America's Security Role in a Changing World: A Global Strategic Assessment

April 7–8, 2009

Over the coming decade and beyond, the United States and the international community will face enormously complex security challenges and threats, some of which are not traditionally viewed as security issues. Given the emerging nature of and interdependencies between these threats and challenges, world leaders are increasingly operating in terra incognita.

In an effort to assist the Obama administration and international leaders in this new and ambiguous environment, the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at the National Defense University performed a global strategic assessment with the assistance of 125 contributors. The objective of the assessment was not to provide policy prescriptions but to offer a portrait of the world that respects the breadth and diversity of issues driving this nascent security environment.

To that end, a publication containing the outcomes of these efforts, *Global Strategic Assessment 2009: America's Security Role in a Changing World*, will be released in the coming weeks. The publication lays out approaches to the international security environment by analyzing eight key functional trends, highlighting critical regional issues, and suggesting an intellectual construct to evaluate challenges and opportunities.

In advance of the final publication's release, INSS convened a public symposium in April 2009 to highlight some of the assessment's key findings and insights. This paper summarizes the symposium presentations and discussions.

## Eight Global Trends

***Trends 1 and 2: Global Redistribution of Economic Power and Political Flux in a Nonpolar World.*** As demonstrated by

the global financial crisis, there is an increasingly significant interface between two worlds—the world of globalization, international economics, and international finance and the world of geopolitics and national security. Although it is difficult to grasp this interface, doing so is progressively more important given its growing impact on global order.

According to a recent statement by the Director of National Intelligence, the global economic crisis and its geopolitical implications make it the primary security concern of the United States. There is now a greater possibility of social unrest around the world due to shrinking global gross domestic product and rising unemployment, which will most likely result in increased poverty and hunger.

Even though the U.S. private sector is being blamed for the crisis, the primary issue was a global imbalance between supply and demand caused by increasing leverage in the private sector, deregulation and lack of regulation in the financial markets, particularly on nontraditional financial instruments such as hedge funds and credit default swaps, and a focus on savings in Asia, Europe, and developing countries. The net result was an increase in the global money supply and a decrease in demand. When U.S. consumers stopped spending, the global economy lost its main source of demand, resulting in a worldwide economic downturn.

The relative resilience of the Chinese and Indian economies versus those in the West reinforced these governments' views that their cautious policies toward broader trade integration were correct. This perception and the view that the Western system caused the crisis will most likely lead to a shift toward the Chinese and Indian models.

This then leads to the second trend—political flux in a “nonpolar world.” The “unipolar moment” has ended and a more global distribution of power is taking its place. Prior to the financial crisis, economic, financial, and political power was shifting toward rising powers such as the “BRIC” countries—that is, Brazil, Russia, India, and China. High demand for energy and the flow of petrodollars enabled oil-producing states to exert both economic and political influence on the global system and facilitated Iran’s challenging of the West on the nuclear issue. These developments, along with the increasingly powerful role played by nonstate actors, forced a rethink of the more traditional statist, multipolar models of the past.

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Together these two trends will have significant impact on the current international order—tomorrow’s system will be quite different than today’s. The shift toward Asia will be particularly noteworthy as China becomes an even stronger global player politically, economically, and militarily.

One result may be the end of an era when private finance is *the* driver of globalization. As demonstrated by responses to the financial crisis, government and political influence may take its place. How exactly this shift in power from the private to the public sector will play out in security and foreign policy is yet to be seen. However, if developing countries move away from private investment and financial liberalism toward more public investment models, then traditional global foreign aid strategies and policies will need to adapt. The orientation toward saving is also likely to continue. Thus, a prolonged decrease in demand may also result in increased protectionism and a greater shift toward national financial systems.

There are both positives and negatives for the United States regarding its position in this new order. On the positive side, the United States has a popular new President, the situation in Iraq has turned primarily from a negative to a positive, and the financial crisis has shown the resilience of American power as evidenced by the strength of the dollar. The world is also turning to America to lead it out of the crisis via positive economic growth. Even China still appears to see its economic future linked to the United States.

On the negative side, there has been a decline in American prestige. The U.S. ability to translate military power into influence and outcomes is also waning. And, even given the shift in power away from America, there is potential for other countries to “free-ride” rather than taking on the requisite greater responsibility that should accompany greater power.

Overall, the redistribution of economic and financial power and the move toward a nonpolar world will require a rethink of both America’s role in and support of the international system, particularly as its future role is likely to be more limited than in the past.

***Trend #3: Impact of the Information Revolution.*** The information revolution enabled many of the economic, financial, and political changes that led to the ongoing shifts in the global landscape. However, it is important to stress that technology enabled positives and negatives but did not and will not determine the outcomes. The old models of financial regulation were developed for an analog world and could not keep pace with the changing digital landscape.

The same could be said about current security models. These are based on a nation-state model that gives states a monopoly on violence. In reality, technology has helped break down this monopoly by allowing nonstate actors to project power, get a seat at the table, and meddle in international crises. The result is a materialization of new vulnerabilities and threats that cannot be addressed by the temporal and defense-oriented security models of the past.

Yet, in addition to enabling the development of a new, complex security environment, cyber can also enable the development of a new security model to address these new challenges since it mirrors the complexities of the emerging security landscape. Cyber can go from benign to malicious simultaneously. Technology also drives toward efficiency by taking out the slack of redundancy that protects shocks to the system. Real-world frictions do not exist to slow things down. This speed of change combined with the fact that the vectors of attack are so great make it impossible to defend against all threats. Failure will occur, which means it must be recognized and built into a model that focuses on deterrence, resilience, and recovery.

Defense in the cyber world also provides real-world tactics that can be applied to counter new security threats. One is the recognition that a first party’s behavior is often controlled by a third party. Therefore, punishment should not be directed at the first party. Instead, power should be exerted over the controlling third parties. An example from the cyber world is the third-party role played by Internet service providers (ISPs.) Power can be exerted over these players by making them meet certain criteria if they are going to interact with the larger network. These criteria

then impact the behavior of end users who use the ISPs. Another tactic is fostering the “futility of attack,” taking away gains even from successes by having a backup to the main system. For example, Georgia moved to a publicly available network, Google, in response to recent cyber attacks. A third tactic is the idea of counterproductivity. The objective is to foster an environment in which the use of particular tactics or weapons is counterproductive to the long-term interests of the potential attackers. The military’s counterinsurgency strategy is a case in point, trying to separate terrorists from other political insurgents by delegitimizing the use of particular violent tactics. The last and perhaps most effective tactic is the creation of dependency, where actors are dependent upon the system. This decreases the probability that they will bring the system down. For example, the probability of a cyber attack by another state against Wall Street is much lower since so many of the world’s elites have money invested there.

Each of these tactics tends to focus on offensive rather than defensive measures. Again, given the nonpolar, multi-player, multidimensional strategic environment, failure will occur. The key is to take steps that lessen the probability of those threats becoming reality.

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**Trend #4: Energy and Environmental Insecurity.** The energy crisis is actually three interrelated crises: a global warming crisis, fuel crisis, and diplomatic crisis. Global warming threatens to create an environmental crisis unlike any that has been seen before with potentially devastating effects on less-developed countries. The impact of the fuel crisis also goes beyond increased prices. The real obstacle to finding solutions is price instability. Massive investment is required to develop solutions, and investors are unwilling to put down large sums of money in a market that remains this unstable.

These first two crises then contribute to the third, which is a diplomatic crisis, particularly for the United States. Global warming is already being used as a diplomatic wedge issue against America since it produces a huge amount of global carbon emissions but has not taken a leadership role in finding a solution to the problem. Other diplomatic challenges have arisen around the

demand for and supply of fuel. The Russian invasion of Georgia, which some believe was related to gas pipelines, led to some hot diplomacy between the United States and Russia. High energy prices pumped money into countries with unfriendly regimes such as Iran and Venezuela, which enabled them to challenge America in international forums. Moreover, given the global economy’s dependence on oil, the United States and its allies have to be careful in dealing with these oil-producing states given the potential to negatively impact fuel supplies and prices.

Having all three of these crises hit at once makes it difficult to solve even one of them since the possible solutions for resolving one tend to conflict with solving the other two. On the flip side, since there is overlap among the three, there should be opportunities to develop more comprehensive solutions that take advantage of that overlap. Yet the two U.S. actors most capable of funding work on these solutions—Congress and the business world—are facing their own constraints. Individual Members of Congress often feel compelled to serve their individual constituencies, thereby constraining their abilities to serve the interests of America as a whole. Business is also not investing due to the extreme startup costs and risks associated with such new endeavors.

Even given these constraints, one actor that may be able to catalyze solutions is the Department of Defense. Historically, the military has had the capability to affect industry once it puts that capability to work. For example, the Atlas rocket project led to future commercial space endeavors. On the energy front, each of the Services is developing a culture of conservation. Military bases are “going green” by using electric cars, reducing fuel consumption, and partnering with industry to create renewable power. In addition to the findings that may be extrapolated out from these initiatives to further innovation in the private sector, another important byproduct is a large cadre of people educated on these issues. As these people go back into and interact with society at large, the ensuing technology transfer could have substantial positive effects on the U.S. ability to deal with these crises.

**Trend #5: Fragile States and Ungoverned Spaces.** The challenges posed when a state cannot fulfill its sovereign responsibilities are becoming even more multifaceted. These states often overlie areas prone to political instability, ethno-sectarianism, and extremist violence; sit astride the global commons and access routes; and usually have a humanitarian element to their crises that complicates security responses.

Historical trends and issues, including decolonization and the end of the Cold War, contributed to the problems of sovereignty and governance. Yet these fragile states are also grappling with a multitude of new challenges, including the enabling nature of technology, rising power of nonstate

actors, and effects of global warming. A result of these increasing pressures is the emergence of nontraditional international security threats such as “toll-taking,” in which nonstate actors take tolls on commercial activities with the main goal of benefiting from the activities rather than disrupting them (that is, piracy); illicit “hitchhiking,” whereby actors take advantage of the international trading systems to traffic items such as drugs and arms; and an incubating function that enables the manifestation of transnational threats such as terrorism.

Yet if the United States wants to be successful in dealing with fragile states, it cannot focus solely on mitigating or stopping transnational threats. It must also acknowledge that state fragility and lack of governance are often driven by the internal dynamics of conflict. These internal dynamics provide the oxygen, or the conditions, for transnational movements to take root. Therefore, prior to taking any action, it is imperative that the United States understand what is driving these internal conflicts and determine the main problems that have to be addressed in order to positively affect the conflict trajectory. Key lessons learned from past interventions are the importance of disaggregating the problem and understanding the local aspects of it, including the local actors.

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***Trend #6: Transnational Movements and Terrorism.***

Transnational movements have tremendous power to contribute to the global good and, in their incarnation as terrorists, bring about violence, death, and repression. Even though the United States has developed the ability to manage and even destroy adversarial organizations and is becoming increasingly effective at handling adversarial networks, its capacity to handle entities best characterized as movements is still weak. Today’s focus is on networks and network analysis rather than on movements and social movement theory. This imbalance creates real problems in the realm of transnational networks and terrorism as the most prominent threat arises from a transnational *movement*, Salafi jihadism. Within this movement, the al Qaeda *network* is the standard bearer.

U.S. policymakers have been presented with two differing analyses of the health of and risk posed by al Qaeda and its broader Salafi jihadist community. One argues that the al Qaeda network operating from the Afghan-Pakistan border

remains the gravest threat for terrorism. The contending perspective is that al Qaeda’s operational decline renders it less salient, thus the growing threat is from diffuse, low-level groups inspired by al Qaeda. These groups are recruited out of local social networks and act out of a shared belief that serves as the basis for the larger Salafi jihadist movement. The fact is that both of these threats are important, and both need to be addressed.

To that end, there are two partnering approaches that the United States may want to use in tandem with its current defensive actions. The first recognizes that the Salafi jihadist movement is surrounded by enemies—Western democracies, the media (including the Arab media), governments from majority Muslim states, mainstream Muslims, and even other Islamists. Each of these groups is a potential U.S. partner. Of these partners the most likely to be effective are credible Sunni Muslims. The United States should work in tandem with them and support their efforts to combat both the network and movement aspects of the threat.

The second relates to the decline in America’s international standing, especially within Muslim populations. Given this situation, any action taken by the United States may increase this decline while simultaneously increasing the popularity of the Salafi jihadist movement. Therefore, taking the U.S. “face” off of initiatives by working with partners on capacity-building tactics such as security sector reform may ultimately make American efforts more effective.

***Trend #7: Changing Character of War.*** Future conflicts will be driven by simultaneous, diverse issues such as climate change, access to the global commons, the expansion of nuclear powers, global inequality, cyberterrorism, and the rise of super-empowered individuals. Thus, the future security environment cannot be viewed as a single linear issue. Rather, it should be viewed as a cone of probability with the realization that the real risks and opportunities tend to exist out on the boundaries.

A current question being asked is whether the wars being fought now are an aberration or the base of future conflict. The reality is that no one can say for sure. Even an analysis of the current security environment offers at least four potential ways of thinking about it:

- ◆ a backlash against globalization and the Western-led, U.S.-dominated effects on others’ way of life
- ◆ a globalized insurgency drawing strength from its ability to mobilize a population base
- ◆ a civil war within the Islamic world driven by a Shia revival and/or al Qaeda’s strategy to change the Muslim world
- ◆ an asymmetric, military model of warfare.

Each of these frames can generate different approaches to the problem.

What the United States will continue to face is a complex mix of regular and irregular conflict. Given both the nature of the current security threats and probabilities of those that may arise in the future, the best approach for the United States is not to pick one to address to the exclusion of others, but to pick one as the priority and hedge against the others. It may also be beneficial to think about six major mission sets around which America needs organizing capacity: state-on-state warfare, strategic disruption, countersanctuary, civil-military assistance, strategic information warfare, and clandestine and denied-area diplomacy.

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As part of its future approach, the United States also needs to decide if it wants to remain the international “force of last resort.” This decision has major implications not only for America’s defense and security but also for those of its allies. Since today’s security problems are global in nature, a continued U.S. “force of last resort” role may increase the potential of “free-riding” by other states as some feel is currently happening in Afghanistan and Pakistan. A better mindset going forward may be to think in terms of what the United States and its allies are going to do about these issues rather than focusing primarily on what an American response will be.

***Trend #8: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass***

***Destruction.*** There is both good news and bad news about proliferation. The good news is that the worst fears regarding the proliferation and use of these weapons have not been realized. The bad news is that there is an increased possibility of both things happening due to the diffusion of materials, scientific knowledge, technology, and industrial capacity.

On the proliferation front, the programs in North Korea, Iran, and possibly Syria could set the stage for another round of nuclear proliferation. This is causing real concern on the part of U.S. allies such as the Gulf Cooperation Council states, Japan, and South Korea. The United States needs to take these countries’ concerns seriously not only because they are important allies but also because heightened threat perceptions may lead these countries to reconsider their own nuclear options.

When looking at the current concerns about proliferation and worrisome actors, it will be important to reassess how deterrence would operate in response to current and future threats. Adapting deterrence to this changed world will require a better understanding of potential adversaries. This in turn will assist in developing a full realm of military and nonmilitary deterrence options for each situation. Another key success factor will be determining how to plan for collective deterrence given the shifting nature of the international system.

Finally, going forward, an important driver of international approaches to the nuclear challenge will be how the U.S. administration decides to handle President Obama’s stated twin commitments—the reduction of nuclear weapons working toward the long-term goal of eventual elimination while, in the meantime, maintaining an effective nuclear deterrent for both the United States and its allies.

## **Regional Surveys**

***Middle East.*** Although major U.S. interests in the region have not changed, there are four critical issues for planning and security policy over the next decade.

The first is Iran’s regional and nuclear ambitions. Iran views itself as a regional power and, given its threat perceptions, is committed to a deterrence strategy that threatens extremely harsh responses to any attack. Given this context, the United States is wise to pursue engagement. This will not be easy as the big issue is trust. There are also still questions as to whom exactly America should engage since strategic decisions in Iran are driven by military/security perceptions rather than by diplomats. Former Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, intelligence, and other security personnel are more influential than the clerics. In light of this opaqueness, the United States should engage with the government as a whole, particularly as negotiations tend to start at the lower levels of government.

The second is Iraq. It is not a failing state, and its future seems to be less in doubt. The questions now are about power and personal gains. The central government is trying to strengthen its position and exert influence throughout the country even though the constitution was written to prevent this. These efforts are fueling Kurdish and Shia suspicions that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is trying to become the next Saddam Hussein. Iranian control of Iraq is also unlikely, as it is not in Iraq’s nature to accept it. Iran’s preeminence in the region is temporary as Iraq will be back. The question is in what form. Will it be an Arab Iraq, a Shia Iraq aligned with Iran, or something else? Given this ambiguity, the U.S. aim should be to help Iraq ease back into the region and gain acceptance as a partner.

The third is the Arab-Israeli peace process. Regarding Israel-Palestine, the military action in Gaza earlier this year put a stop to any kind of discussions. Palestinian and Israeli politics are also an issue as there is no unified Palestinian leadership with which to negotiate and members of Israel's new far-right government have made statements that are not exactly conducive to future negotiations. On a more positive note, the Arab Peace Initiative is still on the table, and there may be a possible breakthrough in U.S.-Syria and Syria-Israeli relations. Regarding the Israel-Syria track, the Syrian price will be the Golan Heights while the U.S. and Israeli objectives will be peace and the separation of Syria from actors such as Iran, Hizballah, and Hamas.

The fourth is reform in the region. Even given the outcomes of past democracy promotion efforts, this challenge is still out there. The United States will get called upon to engage due to its support for regional governments that are still reluctant to reform.

**South Asia.** This region is of accelerating importance to the United States for a variety of security, political, and economic reasons. First is the existence of significant nuclear and conventional military risk, particularly in the Indo-Pakistani relationship. There is reason to believe that both are expanding their nuclear capabilities as fast as they can. Second is the existence of influential neighbors that have relationships with key countries in the area (that is, Iranian and Chinese relationships with Pakistan). Third, South Asia encompasses one-third to one-half of the world's Muslim population, located in two enormous democracies, Pakistan and India, and in one emerging democracy, Afghanistan. The relationship between Muslims and governance in South Asia is quite different than in the Middle East, and this connection deserves study. Fourth is the rise of strategic powers such as India with which the United States does not have a traditional relationship. The U.S.-India relationship may be the most important political relationship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Fifth is governance in Pakistan. The past record of democratic change is troubling, and Pakistan has been hit hard by the economic crisis. Both issues should raise fears about its future stability and governance. Fifth, al Qaeda and the Taliban are operating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Currently, the U.S. focus is on its own short-term interests. The importance of the region to both U.S. and international security necessitates a change in this approach to a regional strategy focusing on strategic partnerships with key states. The successful development of such a strategy will hinge on U.S. acknowledgment of the global shift toward a multipolar or nonpolar world that, in turn, will result in a much more complex diplomatic environment, including the

demand for more equal partnerships. The fact that several of the most vital states are democracies also means that it will be more difficult to get these governments to do what the United States wants in the short term without also considering the internal political impacts on these countries. For example, in Pakistan the greatest security threat is India rather than the al Qaeda/Taliban threats in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Finally, there are other mid- to long-term issues that the United States should keep on its security horizon. On the political front, these include fragile democracies in Bangladesh and Afghanistan and the ongoing situations in Sri Lanka and Nepal. On the security front, the Indian Ocean is becoming a higher priority due to issues such as sea lines of communications, linkages from the Persian Gulf to South Asia, and rising regional threat perceptions should India follow through on its submarine-based nuclear deterrent plans. There will also be "softer" emerging security concerns connected to demographics, pollution, global warming, and water.

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**Russia/Eurasia.** The year 2008 was a watershed year for Russian-Western relations, with the key event being the war in Georgia. The conflict shook the prevailing Western view that Russia would emerge from the Cold War as a country with similar values as the West, leading it to eventually become a full-fledged partner. Instead, Russian policy proved more akin to the older ideal of a balance of major powers and interests, hence its claim to ongoing influence in the former Soviet republics.

Before the West slips too easily into a policy of containment, it must appreciate the more complex nature of the situation. The year 2008 was also a critical year for Russia domestically. Its large currency reserves and combined oil, gas, and mineral wealth did not insulate it from the global financial crisis. And since the government built its plans on increasing capital from global investment and oil profits, this economic decline may result in serious threats to Russian military and domestic stability. The possibility of social unrest places the Russian leadership in a more precarious position.

There are also urgent international issues in which Russia has considerable interests, concerns, and influence. The expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to include Georgia and Ukraine is of great concern to Russia and will require a new U.S. transatlantic bargain with Europe. On Iran, Russia cannot deliver an outcome to the United States, but it can be a useful participant in multilateral efforts. Russia also has considerable influence in Central Asia, and America needs to ensure access to the region to support its efforts in Afghanistan.

Going forward, Russian decisions will be jointly influenced by major domestic difficulties and a desire to be more assertive in foreign policy. The West may not feel that the claim staked by Russia is supportable, but maintaining an acceptable East-West relationship is still important for larger geographical, energy, nuclear, and geopolitical reasons. The London Summit was a step in the right direction, but the relationship will continue to be difficult given the fundamental differences in Western and Russian world views.

**East and Southeast Asia.** China will remain the focal point as the rising power in the international system—economically, politically, and militarily. As China continues to rise, the United States will become more vulnerable and will need to determine how to mitigate threats by managing a relationship that is simultaneously complex, important, and ambiguous. Major difficulties for America in this regard are the likely continuation of an authoritarian Chinese political system and uncertainties surrounding how great a military power China will be in the future.

The overall security issue will be managing competition, as cooperation will be “a must” in the emerging global order. Competition may play out in four areas: nuclear, space and counter-space, cyber warfare, and communications. In spite of these significant areas for competition, there are also areas of considerable common interest, such as resolving the global economic crisis and maintaining the security of and access to the global commons.

There are several interlocking approaches that the United States can use to manage competition and also to get China onboard with its increasing international responsibility: place limits on competition, particularly in the areas of nuclear and space developments, which could ramp up competition on both sides, keep competition within the broader relationship of cooperation, provide a path for China to pursue its interests in the international system, and actively seek an expansion of security cooperation including bilaterally between the two militaries.

**Europe.** The nature of transatlantic security structures is changing due to a number of factors. The unipolar moment has passed. Europe is less confident that European and U.S.

interests, strategies, and policies will match as the former does not view the most pressing threats as predominantly military. Regarding NATO, while the strategy and rhetoric may be right, the resource commitments have not kept pace. Europe also wants to balance its commitment to NATO with its desire for cooperative European security approaches within the European Union (EU). It wants to have its own military capability and the ability to exercise it globally, particularly in Africa.

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Going forward, the United States will have to be more flexible as the NATO and EU architectures will not merge into one great security forum. The EU will not agree on a fixed ceiling on EU operations, and, given the limits on EU resources, effective future U.S.–EU cooperation models may be some variation of those used in Afghanistan or Kosovo. The United States must also accept a broader NATO focus encompassing nontraditional security issues, such as immigration and climate change.

Two critical tests for the future transatlantic relationship will be NATO solidarity, or a lack thereof, in Afghanistan and how the two different security structures (NATO and the EU) will proceed to manage the relationship with Russia.

**Africa.** Africa compels interest and attention for somewhat conflicting reasons. There is a “rich” face of Africa—significant natural resources, an openness to external investment, and an increasing ability to speak with a single voice, which is giving it more power in the international system. There is also a “poor” face—ineffective governance, increasing poverty and disease, and the early negative impacts of global climate change.

Unlike the United States, which focuses on poor Africa and development aid, China is capitalizing on the trends and opportunities of rich Africa, cultivating its own long-term strategic interests through economic and diplomatic efforts. China has heavily invested in Africa, bundling investment ventures with foreign aid. These come with no strings attached. The result is that next year China will surpass the United States as Africa’s top trading partner. Even more influential than this economic strategy is China’s aggressive diplomatic outreach over the past 10 years. It has focused on building relationships with the

recognition that Africa will continue a significant international political force.

Even given its more positive developments, Africa will continue to pose strategic challenges for the United States and international community. Access to its resources could become a focal point for international competition. The environmental degradation that is already occurring will be hard to reverse. A result is that rapid urbanization is taking place and could destabilize already fragile governments. Outmigration will occur and is liable to impact Europe. Much of Africa is also ungoverned, even in urban areas, making it prone to future violence and exploitation.

Thus, the United States needs to rethink its approach to Africa, acknowledging the opportunities that exist along with the humanitarian issues and security threats. The most important factor that can positively influence Africa's future is improved governance. Economic growth and security cannot be sustained without it. The United States currently has no formula for bringing better governance to Africa. The lesson learned from past efforts is that reform only succeeds when external efforts are eventually owned by Africans. Fortunately, there are calls for better governance emanating from within Africa. This trend tends to be strongest in areas where there is entrepreneurship, a growing middle class, and a Western-educated population.

Therefore, the United States may want to organize its Africa policy around the identification of and support for African groups and individuals that advocate for better governance. In doing so, America must also recognize and contend with the fact that this approach may be viewed as subversive and will be unwelcome by some African leaders and European allies.

**The Americas.** Historically, the United States has asserted that *it* cannot be stable and secure if the *larger Americas* were not stable and secure. In spite of this statement, U.S. action has tended toward hegemony and taking the larger region for granted.

Given the shifting international system and its complex geopolitical changes, the United States might want to change its approach. Although the Americas may not present the level of security challenges found in other parts of the globe, the region offers significant economic opportunity given its energy supplies, human capital, and agricultural base. And while the region continues to avoid challenging America and remains a major trading partner, these countries are becoming more distant and more willing to cultivate other partners and investments outside of the hemisphere. The result is real autonomy for these countries and new obstacles for the United States in its relationship with the region.

If America wants to maintain its position, it will need to move toward a more collaborative approach. In light of

historical relations, it will need to create the conditions to move forward. A good start would be the recognition that U.S. global power resides within the region as well as in the United States. To that end, a new framework should be built around respect, a nurturing of trust, and the willingness to work both bilaterally and multilaterally on common interests. From a military perspective, two common areas of interest that present opportunities are collaboration on disaster response and more U.S. support for the Brazilian-led peace operations in Haiti.

## Recalibrating American Power

**Afghanistan Strategy.** There is support for what the U.S. administration is doing with its new strategy and, even more importantly, the resource allocations behind it. Even so, there are three overall concerns about the new strategy.

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### America must determine how to lead in an increasingly networked and horizontal world and also determine how to work more effectively through global organizations

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First is the focus on going after al Qaeda. While this may be rhetorically popular in the United States and internationally, it is not understandable as a strategy. This was the approach used in the first 5 years in Afghanistan and it failed. Lessons learned have shown that the way to succeed is to protect the population and build institutions, so the Afghan people can hold the country together once external forces leave. The good news is that, even given the rhetoric on getting al Qaeda, the U.S. administration is actually promoting population security and institution-building.

Second is that the size of the necessary Afghan forces was not correctly identified prior to the NATO Summit. Most people now recognize that the need will exceed the target of around 210,000 army and police personnel. The reason this matters is that it was important to ask U.S. allies to help pay for that larger Afghan security force. Tying this back to the larger theme of American global leadership, it would have been helpful to have this goal set out in advance.

Third is the lack of an international coordinator for diplomacy and development. The current leaders there cannot do it. This is not a role for the U.S. Ambassador for two reasons: he represents the United States and, although it has two-thirds of the military force, the United States only has one-third of the development assistance being channeled



to Afghanistan. The United Nations (UN) representative is not in the position to act as coordinator since the UN effort is perhaps 10 percent of the total donor effort. Finally, the Afghans do not have the ministerial capacity to deal with the number of donors.

This, then, leads to a policy recommendation, which is the need to establish a new international command arrangement mimicking the “Petraeus-Odierno-Crocker model” from Iraq. This international model would have a NATO general in charge with a U.S. operational commander and a NATO ally coordinating international diplomacy and development.

**National Security Reform.** Three interrelated factors are driving national security reform efforts. One is an inability to integrate all elements of power in a new security environment that requires a more complex response. Specific obstacles to this more integrated approach are an embedded emphasis on hierarchy and functional expertise and the lack of an overarching coordinating structure to oversee this integration. Another factor is constraints on resourcing. Currently, all resources are controlled by the departments and agencies that are reinforced by the committee system in Congress. This makes it difficult to put resources behind national priorities. The final factor is centralization. It is hard to control national security efforts even through delegation to national security officials. Inevitably, when a crisis occurs, control is pulled back to the National Security Council since the White House, via the President, is the only place that can dictate an interagency process. The problem with this approach is that the number and complexity of the problems in today’s security environment are too much to handle with a centralized approach, which actually becomes a bottleneck.

These three issues can be fixed. The major challenge is gaining political support for the solutions required as was demonstrated by the response, or lack thereof, to the 9/11 Commission report and recommendations. The longer it takes to resolve these national security reform issues, the greater the likelihood that there will be more situations such as Iraq and 9/11.

The overriding message is that the United States is operating in an increasingly complex global security environment in which America’s role will be simultaneously vital and more limited. Given the dynamic shifts in the international system, the United States will need to rethink its approach while also acknowledging the central leadership role it still plays.

Since the U.S. strategic inheritance focuses more on traditional threats and environments, policymakers will have to revisit basic questions and first principles to reconsider the fundamentals of grand strategy. This requires the ability

to get beyond current wars and reorient toward the ideas of risk and uncertainty. It also takes a disciplined rigor toward building strategy.

Engagement will be critical. It will entail embedding the United States in a more effective international architecture, focusing on how to strengthen and protect the international system, and recognizing that allies and partners are more important than ever. To that end, America must determine how to lead in an increasingly networked and horizontal world and also determine how to work more effectively through global organizations. This means that the United States needs a better grasp of the world and its opportunities, which in turn demands a greater understanding of varying global perspectives, including those of regional and nonstate actors.

The United States will also need to accept the limits of military power and reorient toward a more comprehensive approach that incorporates defense, diplomacy, and development, and that also integrates economic power into a broader foreign and security policy agenda.

Finally, the United States must acknowledge that articulating a grand strategy does not make it happen. Policymakers will have to be able to segue from assessment to strategy and from strategy to implementation. There must be a focus on operational implementation, including institutionalizing the appropriate types of thinking for a complex future. Thus, efforts cannot stop with the policy thinking part of the equation. This need for a greater emphasis on implementation will require a huge but essential transition if the United States is to successfully navigate the complexities of the new world order.

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